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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. ANDREW FULLER,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

GOSPEL WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION:

OR,

THE DUTY OF SINNERS TO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST.

WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX,

ON THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE EXISTENCE OF AN HOLY DISPOSITION OF HEART BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BELIEVING IN CHRIST.

Go, preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned!

JESUS CHRIST.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE author had no thoughts of reprinting the present publication, till he was repeatedly requested to do so from very respectable quarters.

The corrections and additions, which form a considerable part of this edition, are such as, after a lapse of fifteen years, the writer thought it proper to make. It would be inexcusable for him to have lived all this time, without gaining any additional light by what he has seen and heard upon the subject; and still more so, to publish a second edition, without doing all in his power towards improving it. The *omissions*, however, which also are considerable, are not always owing to a disapprobation of the sentiment; but to other things presenting themselves, which appeared to be more immediately in point.

1801.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

WHEN the following pages were written, (1781,) the author had no intention of publishing them. He had formerly entertained different sentiments. For some few years, however, he had begun to doubt whether all his principles on these subjects were scriptural. These doubts arose chiefly from thinking on some passages of scripture; particularly, the latter part of the second Psalm, where kings who *set themselves against the Lord, and against his Anointed*, are positively commanded to *kiss the Son:* also, the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; who, he found, did not hesitate to address unconverted sinners; and that, in the most pointed manner: saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* And it appeared, to him, there must be a most unwarrantable *force* put upon these passages, to make them mean any other repentance and faith than such as are connected with salvation.

Reading the lives and labours of such men as Elliot, Brainerd, and several others, who preached Christ with so much success to the American Indians, had an effect upon him. Their work, like that of the apostles, seemed to be plain before them. They appeared, to him, in their addresses to those poor, benighted heathens, to have none of those difficulties with which he felt himself encumbered. These things led him to the throne of grace, to implore instruction

resolution. He saw that he wanted both; the one to know the mind of Christ, and the other to avow it.

He was, for some time, however, deterred from disclosing his doubts. During nearly four years, they occupied his mind; and not without increasing. Being once in company with a minister whom he greatly respected, it was thrown out, as a matter of inquiry, Whether we had generally entertained just notions concerning unbelief. It was common to speak of unbelief as a calling in question the truth of our own personal religion; whereas he remarked, "It was the calling in question the truth of what God had said." This remark appeared to carry in it its own evidence.

From this time, his thoughts upon the subject began to enlarge. He preached upon it more than once. From hence, he was led to think on its opposite, faith, and to consider it as *a persuasion of the truth of what God has said;* and, of course, to suspect his former views concerning its not being the duty of unconverted sinners.

He was aware, that the generality of Christians with whom he was acquainted, viewed the belief of the gospel as something presupposed in faith, rather than as being of the essence of it; and considered the contrary as the opinion of Mr. Sandeman, which they were agreed in rejecting, as favourable to a dead, or inoperative kind of faith. He thought, however, that what they meant by a belief of the gospel was nothing more than a general assent to the doctrines of revelation, unaccompanied with love to them, or a dependance on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. He had no doubt but that such a notion of the subject ought to be rejected: and, if this be the notion of Mr. Sandeman, (which, by the way, he does not know, having never read any of his works,) he has no scruple in saying, it is far from any thing which he intends to advance.*

* Since the first edition of this Piece made its appearance, the author has seen Mr. Sandeman's writings, and those of Mr. A M'Lean, who, on this subject, seems to agree with Mr Sandeman. Justice requires him to say, that these writers do not appear to plead for a kind of faith which is not *followed* with love, or by a dependance on Christ alone for salvation; but their idea of faith *itself* goes to exclude every thing cordial in it. Though he accords with them, in considering the belief of

It appeared to him, that we had taken unconverted sinners too much upon their word, when they told us that they believed the gospel. He did not doubt but that they might believe many things concerning Jesus Christ and his salvation; but, being blind to the *glory of God*, as it is displayed *in the face of Jesus Christ*, their belief of the gospel must be very superficial, extending only to a few facts, without any sense of their real, intrinsic excellency; which, strictly speaking, is not faith. Those who see no form nor comeliness in the Messiah, nor beauty, that they should desire him, are described as *not believing the report* concerning him.*

He had also read and considered, as well as he was able, President Edwards's *Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*, with some other performances on the difference between natural and moral inability. He found much satisfaction in this distinction; as it appeared, to him, to carry with it its own evidence—to be clearly and fully contained in the scriptures—and calculated to disburden the Calvinistic system of a number of calumnies with which its enemies have loaded it, as well as to afford clear and honourable conceptions of the divine government. If it were not the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, and that, because of their inability; he supposed this inability must be natural, or something which did not arise from an evil disposition: but, the more he examined the scriptures, the more he was convinced, that all the inability ascribed to man, with respect to believing, arises from the aversion of his heart. They *will not* come to Christ, that they may have life; *will not* hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; *will not* seek after God; and *desire not* the knowledge of his ways.

He wishes to avoid the spirit into which we are apt to be betrayed, when engaged in controversy,—that of magnifying the importance of the subject beyond its proper bounds: yet he seriously thinks, the subject treated of in the following pages is of no small importance. To him, it appears to be

the gospel as saving faith; yet there is an important difference in the ideas which they attach to *believing*. This difference, with some other things, is examined, in an Appendix, at the end of this edition.

* Isaiah liii. 1, 2.

the same controversy, for substance, as that which, in all ages, has subsisted between God and an apostate world. God has ever maintained these two principles: *All that is evil is of the creature; and to him belongs the blame of it:* and, *All that is good is of himself; and to him belongs the praise of it.* To acquiesce in *both* these positions, is too much for the carnal heart. The advocates for free-will would seem to yield the former; acknowledging themselves blameworthy for the evil: but they cannot admit the latter. Whatever honour they may allow to the general grace of God, they are for ascribing the preponderance in favour of virtue and eternal life, to their own good improvement of it. Others, who profess to be advocates for free grace, appear to be willing that God should have all the honour of their salvation, in case they should be saved; but they discover the strongest aversion to take to themselves the blame of their destruction, in case they should be lost. To yield both these points to God, is to fall under in the grand controversy with him, and to acquiesce in his revealed will; which acquiescence includes *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* Indeed, it were not very difficult to prove, that each, in rejecting one of these truths, does not, in reality, embrace the other. The Arminian, though he professes to take the blame of the evil upon himself, yet feels no guilt for being a sinner, any farther than he imagines he could, by the help of divine grace, given to him and all mankind, have avoided it. If he admit the native depravity of his heart, it is his misfortune, not his fault: his fault lies, not in being *in* a state of alienation and aversion from God, but in not making the best use of the grace of God to get out of it. And the Antinomian, though he ascribes salvation to free grace, yet feels no obligation for the pardon of his impenitence, his unbelief, or his constant aversion to God, during his supposed unregeneracy. Thus, as in many other cases, opposite extremes are known to meet. Where no grace is given, they are united in supposing that no duty can be required; which, if true, *grace is no more grace.*

The following particulars are premised, for the sake of a clear understanding of the subject:—

First: There is no dispute about the doctrine of election, or any of the discriminating doctrines of grace. They are allowed on both sides; and it is granted, that none ever did, or will, believe in Christ, but those who are chosen of God from eternity. The question does not turn upon what are the causes of salvation, but rather, upon what are the causes of damnation. "No man," as Mr. Charnock happily expresses it, "is an unbeliever, but because he will be so; and every man is not an unbeliever, because the grace of God conquers some, changeth their wills, and bends them to Christ."*

Secondly: Neither is there any dispute concerning who ought to be encouraged to consider themselves as entitled to the blessings of the gospel. Though sinners be freely invited to the participation of spiritual blessings; yet they have no interest in them, according to God's revealed will, while they continue in unbelief: nor is it any part of the design of these pages, to persuade them to believe that they have. On the contrary, the writer is fully convinced, that, whatever be the secret purpose of God concerning them, they are at present under the curse?

Thirdly: The question is not, whether men are bound to do any thing more than the law requires; but, whether the law, as the invariable standard of right and wrong, does not require every man cordially to embrace whatever God reveals: in other words, whether love to God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, does not include a cordial reception of whatever plan he shall, at any period of time, disclose?

Fourthly: The question is not, whether men are required to believe any more than is reported in the gospel, or any thing that is not true; but, whether that which is reported ought not to be believed with all the heart; and whether this be not saving faith?

Fifthly: It is no part of the controversy, whether unconverted sinners be able to turn to God, and to embrace the gospel: but what kind of inability they lie under with respect to these exercises? Whether it consists in the want of natural powers and advantages, or merely in the want of a heart to make a right use of them? If the former, obligation, it is

* *Discourses*, Vol. II. p. 473.

granted, would be set aside; but, if the latter, it remains in full force. They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God: but it does not follow, that they are not obliged to do so; and this their obligation requires to be clearly insisted on, that they may be convinced of their sin, and so induced to embrace the gospel remedy.

Sixthly: The question is not, whether faith be required of sinners as a virtue, which, if complied with, shall be the ground of their acceptance with God; or that on account of which they may be justified in his sight: but, whether it be not required as the appointed *mean* of salvation. The righteousness of Jesus believed in, is the only ground of justification; but faith in him is necessary to our being interested in it. We remember the fatal example of the Jews, which the apostle Paul holds up to our view. *The Gentiles*, saith he, *who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness; even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness:* WHEREFORE? BECAUSE THEY SOUGHT IT NOT BY FAITH, *but, as it were, by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.** Though we had not been elsewhere told, that in doing this they were *disobedient;*† yet our judgements must be strangely warped by system, if we did not conclude it to be their sin, and that by which they fell and perished. And we dare not but charge our hearers, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, to beware of stumbling upon the same stone, and of falling after the same example of unbelief.

Finally: The question is not, whether unconverted sinners be the subjects of exhortation; but, whether they ought to be exhorted to perform spiritual duties? It is beyond all dispute, that the scriptures do exhort them to many things. If, therefore, there be any professors of Christianity who question the propriety of this, and who would have nothing said to them, except that, "if they be elected they will be called," they are not to be reasoned with, but rebuked, as setting themselves in direct opposition to the word of God. The greater part of those who may differ from the author on these sub-

* Rom. ix. 30—32. † 1 Peter ii. 8.

jects, it is presumed, will admit the propriety of sinners being exhorted to duty; only this duty must, as they suppose, be confined to merely natural exercises, or such as may be complied with by a carnal heart, destitute of the love of God. It is one design of the following pages to show, that God requires the heart, the whole heart, and nothing but the heart; that all the precepts of the Bible are only the different modes in which we are required to express our love to him; that, instead of its being true, that sinners are obliged to perform duties which have no spirituality in them, there are no such duties to be performed; and that, so far from their being exhorted to every thing, excepting what is spiritually good, they are exhorted to nothing else. The scriptures undoubtedly require them to read, to hear, to repent, and to pray, that their sins may be forgiven them. It is not, however, in the exercise of a carnal, but of a spiritual state of mind, that these duties are performed.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION,

&c.

PART I.

WHEREIN THE SUBJECT IS SHOWN TO BE IMPORTANT, STATED, AND EXPLAINED.

GOD having blessed mankind with the glorious gospel of his Son, hath spoken much in his word, as it might be supposed he would, of the treatment which it should receive from those to whom it was addressed. A cordial reception of it is called, in scripture, *receiving Christ*, *allowing him*, *believing in him*, *&c.* and the contrary, *refusing*, *disallowing*, and *rejecting him;* and those who thus reject him, are, in so doing, said to *judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.** These are things on which the New Testament largely insists: great stress is there laid on the reception which the truth shall meet with. The same lips which commissioned the apostles to go and *preach the gospel to every creature*, added, *He that* BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED, SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT, SHALL BE DAMNED. *To as many as* RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; but to them *who received him not*, but refused him, and rejected his way of salvation, he became a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence, that they might stumble, and fall, and perish. Thus the gospel, according to the different reception it

* John i. 12. iii. 16. Psa. cxviii. 22. Matt. xxi. 42. 1 Peter ii. 7. Acts xiii. 46.

meets with, becomes a *savour of life unto life*, or *of death unto death*.*

The controversies which have arisen concerning faith in Jesus Christ, are not so much an object of surprise, as the conduct of those, who, professing to be Christians, affect to decry the subject as a matter of little or no importance. There is not any principle or exercise of the human mind, of which the New Testament speaks so frequently, and on which so great a stress is laid. And, with regard to the inquiry, whether faith be required of all men who hear, or have opportunity to hear the word, it cannot be uninteresting. If it be not, to inculcate it would be unwarrantable and cruel to our fellow-sinners, as it subjects them to an additional charge of abundance of guilt: but, if it be, to explain it away is to undermine the divine prerogative, and, as far as it goes, to subvert the very intent of the promulgation of the gospel, which is, that men *should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and, believing, have life through his name*.† This is doubtless a very serious thing, and ought to be seriously considered. Though some good men may be implicated in this matter, it becomes them to remember, that *whosoever breaketh one of the least of Christ's commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*. If believing be a commandment, it cannot be one of the *least:* the important relations which it sustains, as well as the dignity of its object, must prevent this: the knowledge of sin, repentance for it, and gratitude for pardoning mercy, all depend upon our admitting it. And, if it be a *great* commandment, the breach of it must be a great sin; and whosoever teaches men otherwise, is a partaker of their guilt; and, if they perish, will be found to have been accessary to their eternal ruin. Let it be considered, whether the apostle to the Hebrews did not proceed upon such principles, when he exclaimed, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so* GREAT *salvation?* And the Lord Jesus himself, when he declared, HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED!

In order to determine, whether faith in Christ be the duty

* Mark xvi. 16. 1 Peter ii. 8. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

† John xx. 31.

of all men who have opportunity to hear the gospel, it will be necessary to determine what it is, or wherein it consists. Some have maintained, that it consists in a persuasion of our interest in Christ, and in all the benefits and blessings of his mediation. The author of *The Further Inquiry*, Mr. L. Wayman, of Kimbolton, who wrote about sixty years ago upon the subject, questions, "Whether there be any act of special faith, which hath not the nature of appropriation in it;" (p. 13.) and by appropriation he appears to mean, a persuasion of our interest in spiritual blessings. This is the ground upon which he rests the main body of his argument: to overturn it, therefore, will be, in effect, to answer his book. Some, who would not be thought to maintain that a persuasion of interest in Christ, is essential to faith, for the sake of many Christians whom they cannot but observe, upon this principle, to be, generally speaking, unbelievers, yet maintain what fully implies it. Though they will allow, for the comfort of such Christians, that assurance is not of the essence of faith, understanding by assurance, an assured persuasion of our salvation; but, that *a reliance on Christ* is sufficient; yet, in almost all other things, they speak as if they did not believe what, at those times, they say. It is common for such persons to call those fears which occupy the minds of Christians, lest they should miss of salvation at last, by the name of unbelief; and to reprove them for being guilty of this God-dishonouring sin, exhorting them to be strong in faith, like Abraham, giving glory to God; when all that is meant is, that they should, without doubting, believe the goodness of their state. If this be saving faith, it must inevitably follow, that it is *not* the duty of unconverted sinners; for they are not interested in Christ, and it cannot possibly be their duty to believe a lie. But, if it can be proved, that the proper object of saving faith is, not our being interested in Christ, but the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God; (which is true, whether we believe it, or not;) a contrary inference must be drawn: for it is admitted, on all hands, that it is the duty of every man to believe what God reveals.

I have no objection to allowing that true faith "hath in it the nature of appropriation;" if by this term be meant an application of the truths believed to our own particular cases.

"When the scriptures teach," says a pungent writer, "*we* are to receive instruction, for the enlightening of *our own* minds; when they admonish, *we* are to take warning; when they reprove, *we* are to be checked; when they comfort, *we* are to be cheered and encouraged; and when they recommend any grace, *we* are to desire and embrace it; when they command any duty, *we* are to hold ourselves enjoined to do it; when they promise, *we* are to hope; when they threaten, *we* are to be terrified, as if the judgment were denounced against *us;* and when they forbid any sin, *we* are to think they forbid it unto *us* By which application we shall make all the rich treasures contained in the scriptures wholly our own, and in such a powerful and peculiar manner enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as if they had been wholly written for *us*, and none other else besides us."*

By saving faith, we undoubtedly embrace Christ *for ourselves*, in the same sense as Jacob embraced Jehovah as *his* God; (Gen. xxviii. 21.) that is, to a rejecting of every idol that stands in competition with him. Christ is all-sufficient, and suited to save *us*, as well as others; and it is for the forgiveness of *our* sins, that we put our trust in him. But this is very different from a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation.

My objections to this notion of faith are as follows:—

First: Nothing can be an object of faith, except what God has revealed in his word: but the interest that any individual has in Christ and the blessings of the gospel, more than another, is not revealed. God has no where declared, concerning any one of us, as individuals, that we shall be saved: all that he has revealed on this subject respects us *as characters*. He has abundantly promised, that all who *believe in him*, *love him*, and *obey him*, shall be saved; and a persuasion, that, *if we sustain these characters*, we shall be saved, is, doubtless, an exercise of faith: but whether we do, or not, is an object, not of faith, but of consciousness. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.—My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth: hereby*

* Downame's *Guide to Godliness*, p. 647.

*we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him**. If any one imagine that God has revealed to him his interest in his love; and this, in a special, immediate, and extraordinary manner, and not by exciting in him the holy exercises of grace, and thereby begetting a consciousness of his being a subject of grace, let him beware, lest he deceive his soul. The Jews were not wanting in what some would call the faith of assurance: *We have one Father*, said they, *even God:* but Jesus answered, *If God were your Father, ye would love me.*

Secondly: The scriptures always represent faith as terminating on something without us; namely, on Christ, and the truths concerning him: but, if it consist in a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation, it must terminate, principally, on something within us; namely, the work of grace in our hearts: for to believe myself interested in Christ, is the same thing as to believe myself a subject of special grace. And hence, as was said, it is common for many who entertain this notion of faith, to consider its opposite, unbelief, as a *doubting whether we have been really converted.* But, as it is the truth and excellence of the *things to be interested in*, and not his *interest in* them, that the sinner is apt to disbelieve; so it is these, and not that, on which the faith of the believer primarily terminates. Perhaps, what relates to personal interest may, in general, more properly be called *hope*, than faith; and its opposite, *fear*, than unbelief.

Thirdly: To believe ourselves in a state of salvation, (however desirable, when grounded on evidence,) is far inferior, in its object, to saving faith. The grand object on which faith fixes, is the glory of Christ; and not the happy condition we are in, as interested in him. The latter, doubtless, affords great consolation; and the more we discover of his excellence, the more ardently shall we desire an interest in him, and be the more disconsolate, while it continues a matter of doubt. But, if we be concerned only for our own security, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. As that repentance which fixes merely on the consequences of sin, as subjecting us to misery, is selfish and spurious; so that faith which fixes merely on the consequences of Christ's mediation, as raising us to

* 1 John ii. 3. 5. iii. 18, 19.

happiness, is equally selfish and spurious. It is the peculiar property of true faith, to endear Christ: *Unto you that believe,* HE *is precious.* And, where this is the case, if there be no impediments, arising from constitutional dejection, or other accidental causes, we shall not be in doubt about an interest in him. Consolation will accompany the faith of the gospel: *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Fourthly: All those exercises of faith which our Lord so highly commends in the New Testament, as that of the centurion, the woman of Canaan, and others, are represented as terminating on his *all-sufficiency* to heal them; and not as consisting in a persuasion that they were interested in the divine favour, and, therefore, should succeed. *Speak the word only,* says the one, *and my servant shall be healed: for I am a man in authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, go, and he goeth: and to another, come, and he cometh: and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it.* Such was the persuasion which the other entertained of his all-sufficiency to help her, that she judged it enough, if she might but partake of the crumbs of his table—the scatterings, as it were, of mercy. Similar to this is the following language:—*If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole.*—*Believe ye that I am* ABLE *to do this? They said unto him, yea, Lord.*—*Lord, if thou wilt, thou* CANST *make me clean.*—*If thou* CANST *do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us: Jesus said, if thou* CANST *believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* I allow that the case of these people, and that of a sinner applying for forgiveness, are not exactly the same. Christ had no where promised to heal all who came for healing: but he has graciously bound himself not to cast out any who come to him for mercy. On this account, there is a greater ground for faith in the willingness of Christ to save, than there was in his willingness to heal: and there was less unbelief in the saying of the leper, IF THOU WILT, *thou canst make me clean,* than there would be in similar language from one who, convinced of his own utter insufficiency, applied to him for salvation. But a persuasion of Christ being both able and willing to save all them that come unto God by him, and, consequently, to save us, if we so apply, is very

different from a persuasion that we are the children of God, and interested in the blessings of the gospel.

Mr. Anderson, an American writer, has lately published a pamphlet on the *Scripture-doctrine of the Appropriation which is in the Nature of saving Faith*. The scheme which he attempts to defend, is that of Hervey, Marshall, &c. or that which, in Scotland, is known by the name of the *Marrow* doctrine.* These divines write much about the gospel containing *a gift*, or *grant* of Christ and spiritual blessings to sinners of mankind; and that it is the office of faith so to receive the gift, as to claim it as our own; and thus they seem to have supposed that it becomes our own. But the gospel contains no *gift*, or *grant*, to mankind in general, beyond that of an offer, or free invitation; and thus, indeed, Mr. Boston, in his notes on the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, seems to explain it. It warrants every sinner to believe in Christ for salvation; but no one to conclude himself interested in salvation, till he has believed: consequently, such a conclusion, even where it is well founded, cannot be faith, but that which follows it.

Mr. Anderson is careful to distinguish the appropriation for which he contends, from "the knowledge of our being believers, or already in a state of grace." (p. 61.) He also acknowledges, that the ground of saving faith "is something that may be known before, and in order to the act of faith;" that it is "among the things that are revealed, and which belong to us and to our children." (p. 60.) Yet he makes it of the essence of faith, to believe "that Christ *is ours*." (p. 56.) It must be *true*, then, that Christ is ours, antecedently to our believing it, and whether we believe it or not. This, it seems, Mr. Anderson will admit: for he holds that "God hath made a *gift* or *grant*, of Christ and spiritual blessings, to sinners of mankind;" and which denominates him ours "before we believe it." Yet he does not admit the final salvation of all to whom Christ is thus supposed to be given. To what, therefore, does the gift amount, more than to a free invitation, concerning which his opponents have no dispute with him? A free invitation, though it affords a warrant to apply for mercy,

* Alluding to a work published some years since, under the title of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*.

and that with an assurance of success; yet gives no *interest* in its blessings, but on the supposition of its being accepted. Neither does the gift, for which Mr. A. contends: nothing is conveyed by it, that ensures any man's salvation. All the author says, therefore, against what he calls *conditions* of salvation, is no less applicable to his own scheme, than to that of his opponents. His scheme is as really conditional as theirs. The condition which it prescribes for our becoming interested in the blessings of eternal life, so interested, however, as to possess them, is to believe them to be our own; and without this, he supposes, we shall never enjoy them.

He contends, indeed, that the belief of the promises cannot be called a condition of our right to claim an interest in them: because, if such belief *be* claiming an interest in them, it would be making a thing the condition of itself. (pp. 50, 51.) But to this it is replied: First, Although Mr. A. considers saving faith as *including* appropriation, yet this is only one idea which he ascribes to it. He explains it as consisting of three things: a *persuasion* of divine truth, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit; a *sure* persuasion; and an *appropriating* persuasion of Christ's being ours. (pp. 54—56.) Now, though it were allowed that the last branch of this definition is the same thing as claiming an interest in the promises, and, therefore, cannot be reckoned the condition of it; yet this is more than can be said of the former two, which are no less essential to saving faith, than the other. Secondly, The sense in which the promise is *taken*, by what is called appropriating faith, is not the same as that in which it is *given* in the promise itself. As given in the word, the promise is general, applying equally to one sinner, as to another; but, as taken, it is considered as particular, and as ensuring salvation. Thirdly, If an *interest* in the righteousness of Christ were the immediate object of saving faith, how could it be said, that *unto us it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead?* If Christ's righteousness be ours, it must be so as imputed to us: but this would be making the apostle say, if we believe Christ's righteousness to *be* imputed to us, it *shall be* imputed to us.

I have no partiality for calling faith, or any thing done by us, the condition of salvation; and, if by the term were meant

a deed to be performed, of which the promised good is the reward, it would be inadmissible. If I had used the term, it would have been merely to express the necessary connexion of things, or, that faith is *that without which there is no salvation;* and, in this sense, it is no less a condition in Mr. A.'s scheme, than in that which he opposes. He thinks, however, that the promises of God are, by his statement of things, disencumbered of conditions: yet, how he can prove that God has absolutely given Christ and spiritual blessings to multitudes who will never possess them, I am at a loss to conceive. I should have supposed, that whatever God has absolutely promised would take effect. He says, indeed, that "the Lord may give an absolute promise to those who, in the event, never come to the actual enjoyment of the promised blessing, as in the case of the Israelites being brought to the good land; (Exod. iii. 17.) though the bulk of them that left Egypt perished in the wilderness through unbelief" (p. 43.) It is true, God absolutely promised to plant them, "*as a nation*, in the good land, and this he performed; but he did not absolutely promise that every individual who left Egypt should be amongst them. So far as it respected individuals, (unless it were in reference to Caleb and Joshua,) the promise was not absolute.

Upon the mere ground of Christ being exhibited in the gospel, "I am persuaded," says Mr. A. "that he is *my* Saviour; nor can I, without casting reproach upon the wisdom, faithfulness, and mercy of God, in setting him forth, entertain any doubts about my justification and salvation through his name." (p. 65.) Has God *promised* justification and salvation, then, to every one to whom Christ is exhibited? If he has, it doubtless belongs to faith to give him credit: but, in this case, we ought also to maintain, that the promise will be performed, whatever be the state of our minds; for, though we believe not, he abideth faithful. On the other hand, if the blessing of justification, though freely offered to all, be only promised to believers, it is not faith, but presumption, to be persuaded of my justification, any otherwise than as being conscious of my believing in Jesus for it.

Mr. A. illustrates his doctrine by a similitude. "Suppose that a great and generous prince had made a grant, to a certain class of persons therein described, of large estates, in-

cluding all things suitable to their condition; and had publicly declared, that whosoever of the persons so described would believe such an estate, in virtue of the grant now mentioned, to be his own, should not be disappointed, but should immediately enter upon the granted estate, according to the order specified in the grant. Suppose, too, that the royal donor had given the grant in writing, and had added his seal, and his oath, and his gracious invitation, and his most earnest entreaty, and his authoritative command, to induce the persons described in the grant to accept of it. It is evident, that any one of these persons, having had access to read or hear the grant, must either be verily persuaded that the granted estate is his own, or be chargeable with an attempt to bring dishonour upon the goodness, the veracity, the power, and authority of the donor; on account of which attempt, he is liable, not only to be debarred for ever from the granted estate, but to suffer a most exemplary and tremendous punishment." p. 66.

I suppose the object of this similitude is expressed in the sentence, "It is evident, that any one of these persons, having had access to read or hear the grant, must either be verily persuaded that the granted estate *is his own;* or be chargeable with dishonouring the donor." In what sense, then, *is it his own?* He is freely invited to partake of it: that is all. It is not *so* his own, but that he may ultimately be debarred from possessing it: but, in whatever sense *it is* his own, that is the only sense in which he is warranted to *believe it to be so.* If the condition of his actually possessing it, be his believing that he shall actually possess it, he must believe what was not revealed at the time, except conditionally, and what would not have been true, but for his believing it.

The above similitude may serve to illustrate Mr. A.'s scheme; but I know of nothing like it, either in the concerns of men, or the oracles of God. I will venture to say, there never was a gift, or grant, made upon any such terms; and the man that should make it, would expose himself to ridicule. The scriptures furnish us with an illustration of another kind. The gospel is a *feast, freely provided;* and sinners of mankind are *freely invited* to partake of it. There is no mention of any *gift*, or *grant*, distinct from this; but this itself is a ground sufficient. It affords a complete warrant for any sin-

ner, not, indeed, to believe the provisions to be *his own*, whether he accept the invitation, or not; but that, relinquishing every thing that stands in competition with them, and receiving them as a *free gift*, they *shall be his own*. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.*—*To us it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* Those who were persuaded to embrace the invitation, are not described as coming to *make a claim of it as their property;* but as gratefully accepting it: and those who refused, are not represented as doubting whether the feast was *provided for them;* but as *making light of it*, and preferring their farms and merchandise before it.

In short, if this writer can prove it to be *true*, that justification and eternal life are absolutely given, granted, and promised, to all who hear the gospel, there can be no dispute, whether saving faith includes the belief of it with respect to ourselves, nor whether it be a duty: but, if the thing be false, it can be no part of the faith of the gospel, nor of the duty of a sinner to give credit to it.

But to return. That the belief of the truth which God hath revealed in the scriptures concerning Christ, is saving faith, is evident from the following passages:—*Go preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* Believing, here, manifestly refers to *the gospel* to be preached, and the rejection of which would subject the unbeliever to certain damnation.—*These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.* Believing unto life, is here described as a persuasion of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God: and that on the ground of what was written in the scriptures.—*Those by the way-side, are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe, and be saved.* This language plainly denotes, that a real belief of the word is connected with salvation. Peter confessed, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.* Here it is plainly intimated, that a belief of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God, is saving faith; and that no man

can be strictly said to do this, unless he be the subject of a spiritual illumination from above. To the same purpose, are those express declarations of Paul and John: *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—Whoso believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.—Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?—Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.—He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true.—No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.*—Again: *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* The *light* they then had was that of the gospel; and had they believed it, they would have been the children of *light*, or true Christians. *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.—These things I say, that ye might be saved.* Our Lord could not mean less, by this language, than that, if they believed those things which John testified, and which he himself confirmed, they would be saved; which is the same thing as declaring it to be saving faith. *Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, (because our testimony among you was believed,) in that day.* The words in a parenthesis are evidently intended to give the reason of the phrase, *them that believe*, and intimate, that it was the belief of the gospel testimony that denominated them believers. *God hath chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* It cannot be doubted, that, by the *belief of the truth*, is here meant, faith in Christ; and its being connected with sanctification of the Spirit and eternal salvation, proves it to be saving.*

If the foregoing passages be admitted to prove the point, (and if they do not, we may despair of learning any thing from the scriptures,) the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, cannot fairly be called in question: for, as before said,

* Mark xvi. 16. John xx 31. Luke viii. 12. Matt. xvi. 17. Rom. x. 9. 1 John vi. 5. iv. 15. John iii. 33. 1 Cor. xii. 3. John xii. 36. v. 33, 34. 2 Thes. i. 10. ii. 13.

it is admitted on all hands, that it is the duty of every man to believe what God reveals.

But, to this statement, it is objected, that Christianity having at that time great opposition made to it, and its professors being consequently exposed to great persecution and reproach, the belief and acknowledgment of the gospel was more a test of sincerity than it now is: men are now taught the principles of the Christian religion from their youth, and believe them, and are not ashamed to acknowledge them; while yet they give no evidence of their being born of God, but of the contrary. There is some force in this objection, so far as it respects a *confession* of Christ's name; but I do not perceive that it affects the belief of the gospel. It was no more difficult to believe the truth at that time, than at this; though it might be much more so to avow it. With respect to that traditional assent which is given to Christianity in some nations, it is of the same nature as that which is given to Mahometanism and Paganism in others. It is no more than that of the Jewish nation, in the time of our Lord, towards the Mosaic scriptures. They declared themselves to be Moses' disciples, and had no doubt but they believed him; yet our Lord did not allow that they believed his writings. *Had ye believed Moses*, says he, *ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.** The same is, doubtless, true of all others who assent to his gospel, merely from having been educated in it. Did they believe it, they would be consistent, and embrace those things which are connected with it. It is worthy of remark, that those professors of Christianity who *received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved*, are represented as *not believing the truth*, and as having pleasure in unrighteousness.† To admit the existence of a few facts, without possessing any sense of their humiliating implication, their holy nature, their vast importance, or the practical consequences that attach to them, is to admit the body without the spirit. Paul, notwithstanding his knowledge of the law, and great zeal on its behalf, while blind to its *spirituality*, reckoned himself to be *without the law*.‡ And such are those professing Christians, with respect to the gospel, *who receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved.*

* John v. 46. † 2 Thes. ii. 10. 12. ‡ Rom. vii. 9.

It is farther objected, that men are said to have believed the gospel, who, notwithstanding, were destitute of true religion. Thus some among the chief rulers are said to have *believed in Jesus; but did not confess him: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* It is said of Simon, that he *believed also;* yet he was *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* Agrippa is acknowledged, by Paul, to have *believed the prophets;* and faith is attributed even to the devils. The term *belief*, like almost every other term, is sometimes used in an improper sense. Judas is said to have *repented*, and hanged himself; though nothing more is meant by it, than his being smitten with remorse, wishing he had not done as he did, on account of the consequences. Through the poverty of language, there is not a name for every thing that differs; and, therefore, where two things have the same visible appearance, and differ only in some circumstances which are invisible, it is common to call them by the same name. Thus men are termed *honest*, who are punctual in their dealings, though such conduct, in many instances, may arise merely from a regard to their own credit, interest, or safety. Thus the remorse of Judas is called *repentance;* and thus the convictions of the Jewish rulers, of Simon, and Agrippa, and the fearful apprehension of apostate angels, from what they had already felt, is called *faith.* But, as we do not infer, from the application of the term *repentance* to the feelings of Judas, that there is nothing spiritual in *real* repentance; so neither ought we to conclude, from the foregoing applications of the term *believing*, that there is nothing spiritual in a *real* belief of the gospel.

"The objects of faith," it has been said, "are not bare axioms, or propositions: the act of the believer does not terminate at an axiom, but at *the thing;* for axioms are not formed, but that, by them, knowledge may be had of *things.*" To believe a bare axiom, or proposition, in distinction from the thing, must be barely to believe that such and such letters make certain words; and that such words, put together, have a certain meaning: but who would call this believing the proposition? To believe the proposition, is to believe *the thing.* Letters, syllables, words, and propositions, are only means of conveyance; and these, as such, are not the objects of faith,

but *the thing conveyed.* Nevertheless, those things must have a conveyance, ere they can be believed in. The *person*, *blood*, and *righteousness of Christ*, for instance, are often said to be objects of faith; and this they doubtless are, as they are objects held forth to us by the language of scripture: but they could not meet our faith, unless something were *affirmed concerning them* in letters and syllables, or vocal sounds, or by some means or other of conveyance. To say, therefore, that these are objects of faith, is to say the truth, but not the whole truth; the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, *revealed in the scriptures as the way of a sinner's acceptance with God*, are, properly speaking, the objects of our faith: for without such a revelation, it were impossible to believe in them.

Mr. Booth, and various other writers, have considered faith in Christ as a *dependence* on him, a *receiving* him, a *coming* to him, and *trusting in him* for salvation. There is no doubt but these terms are frequently used, in the New Testament, to express believing. As many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name.—He that *cometh* to me shall never hunger, and he that *believeth* in me shall never thirst.—That we should be to the praise of his glory who first *trusted* in Christ.—I know whom I have *trusted*, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have *committed to him* against that day.* Whether these terms, however, strictly speaking, convey the same idea as believing, may admit of a question. They seem, rather, to be the immediate effects of faith, than faith itself. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes the order of these things, in what he says of the faith of Enoch: *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Here are three different exercises of mind: First, believing *that God is;* Secondly, believing that he is *a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;* Thirdly, *coming* to him: and the last is represented as the effect of the former two. The same may be applied to Christ. He that cometh to Christ, must believe the gospel-testimony, that he is the Son of God, and the Saviour

* John i. 12. vi. 35. Eph. i. 12. 2 Tim. i. 12.

of sinners; the only name given under heaven, and among men, by which we must be saved: he must also believe the gospel-promise, that he will bestow eternal salvation on all them that obey him; and, under the influence of this persuasion, he *comes* to him, *commits* himself to him, or *trusts* the salvation of his soul in his hands. This process may be so quick as not to admit of the mind being conscious of it; and especially as, at such a time, it is otherwise employed than in speculating upon its own operations. So far as it is able to recollect, the whole may appear to be one complex exercise of the soul. In this large sense also, as comprehending not only the credit of the gospel testimony, but the soul's dependence on Christ alone for acceptance with God; it is allowed, that believing is necessary, not only to salvation, but to justification. We must *come* to Jesus, that we may have *life*. Those who attain the blessing of justification, must *seek it by faith*, and *not by the works of the law: submitting* themselves to the righteousness of God. This blessing is constantly represented as following our *union* with Christ: and *he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.**

Let it but be granted, that a real belief of the gospel is not merely a matter presupposed in saving faith, but that it enters into the essence of it; and the writer of these pages will be far from contending for the exclusion of trust, or dependence. He certainly has no such objection to it, as is alleged by Mr. M'Lean; that "to include, in the nature of faith, any holy exercise of the heart, affects the doctrine of justification by grace alone, without the works of the law."† If he supposed, with that author, however, that, in order to justification being wholly of grace, no holiness must precede it; or, that the party must, at the time, be in a state of enmity to God, he must, to be consistent, unite with him also in excluding *trust*, (which, undoubtedly, is a holy exercise,) from having any place in justifying faith; but, persuaded, as he is, that the freeness of justification rests upon no such ground, he is not under this necessity.

The term *trust* appears to be most appropriate, or best

* John v. 40. Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

† *On the Commission*, p. 83.

adapted of any, to express the confidence which the soul reposes in Christ for the fulfilment of his *promises*. We may credit a report of evil tidings as well as one of good; but we cannot be said to trust it. We may also credit a report, the truth or falsehood of which does not at all *concern* us; but that in which we place *trust* must be something in which our well-being is involved. The relinquishment of false confidences which the gospel requires, and the risk which is made in embracing it, are likewise better expressed by this term, than by any other. A true belief of the record which God has given of his Son, is accompanied with all this: but the term *belief* does not, of itself, necessarily convey it. When Jacob's sons brought the coat of many colours to him, he credited their story; he believed Joseph to be torn in pieces: but he could not be said to *trust* that he was. When the same persons, on their return from Egypt, declared that Joseph was yet alive, Jacob, at first, believed them not: but, on seeing the wagons, he was satisfied of the truth of their declaration, and *trusted* in it too; leaving all behind him, on the ground of it.

But, whatever difference there may be between *credit* and *trust*, they agree in those particulars which affect the point at issue: the one, no less than the other, has relation to *revealed truth* as its foundation. In some cases, it directly refers to the divine veracity; as in Psa. cxix. 42. *I trust in thy word.* And where the immediate reference is to the power, the wisdom, or the mercy of God, or to the righteousness of Christ; there is a remote relation to veracity: for neither the one nor the other would be objects of trust, were they not revealed in a way of *promise*. And, from hence, it will follow, that trusting in Christ, no less than crediting his testimony, is the *duty* of every sinner to whom the revelation is made.

If it be asked, what ground could a sinner, who shall, at last, prove to have no interest in the salvation of Christ, ever possess for trusting in him? Let it be considered what it was, for which he was warranted, or obliged, to trust. Was it that Christ would save him, whether he believed in him, or not? No: there is no such promise; but an explicit declaration of the contrary. To trust in this, therefore, would be to trust in a falsehood. That for which he ought to have trusted in him

was the obtaining of mercy, *in case he applied for it.* For this there was a complete warrant in the gospel-declarations, as Mr. Booth, in his *Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners*, has fully evinced. There are principles, in that performance, which the writer of these pages, highly as he respects the author, cannot approve The principal subjects of his disapprobation have been pointed out, and, he thinks, scripturally refuted, by Mr. Scott:* but, with respect to the warrant which every sinner has to trust in Christ for salvation, Mr. B. has clearly and fully established it. I may add, if any man distrust either the power or willingness of Christ to save those that come to him, and so continue to stand at a distance, relying upon his own righteousness, or some false ground of confidence, to the rejection of him; it is criminal and inexcusable unbelief.

Mr. Booth has (to all appearance, designedly) avoided the question, whether faith in Christ be the *duty* of the ungodly? The leading principle of the former part of his work, however, cannot stand upon any other ground. He contends, that the gospel affords a complete *warrant* for the ungodly to believe in Jesus; and surely he will not affirm, that sinners are at liberty either to embrace the warrant afforded them, or to reject it? He defines believing in Jesus Christ, "*receiving* him as he is exhibited in the doctrine of grace, or *depending upon him only.*" But, if the ungodly be not *obliged*, as well as warranted, to do this, they are at liberty to do as the Jewish nation did, to *receive him not*, and to go on depending upon the works of the law for acceptance with God. In the course of his work, he describes the gospel-message as full of kind invitations, winning persuasions, and importunate entreaties; and the messengers as commissioned to persuade and entreat sinners to be reconciled to God, and to regard the vicarious work of Jesus as the only ground of their justification."† But how, if they should remain unreconciled, and continue to disregard the work of Christ? How, if they should, after all, *make light* of this "royal banquet," and prefer their farms and their merchandises to these "plentiful

* See his *Warrant and Nature of Faith.*

† Pages 36, 37, second edition.

provisions of divine grace?" Are they guiltless in so doing, and free from all breach of duty? I am persuaded, whatever was Mr. Booth's reason for being silent on this subject, he will not say they are.

PART II.

CONTAINING ARGUMENTS TO PROVE, THAT FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE DUTY OF ALL MEN WHO HEAR, OR HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR, THE GOSPEL.

WHAT has been already advanced, on the nature of faith in Christ, may contribute to the deciding of the question, whether faith be the duty of the ungodly: but, in addition to this, the scriptures furnish abundance of positive evidence. The principal part of that which has occurred to me may be comprehended under the following propositions:—

I. UNCONVERTED SINNERS ARE COMMANDED, EXHORTED, AND INVITED, TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST FOR SALVATION.

It is here taken for granted, that whatever God commands, exhorts, or invites us to comply with, is the duty of those to whom such language is addressed. If, therefore, saving faith be not the duty of the unconverted, we may expect never to find any addresses of this nature directed to them in the holy scriptures. We may expect that God will as soon require them to become angels, as Christians, if the one be no more their duty than the other.

There is a phraseology suited to different periods of time. Previously to the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the gospel, we read but little of *believing:* but other terms, fully expressive of the thing, are found in abundance. I shall select a few examples, and accompany them with such remarks as may show them to be applicable to the subject.

Psalm ii. 11, 12.—*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* The Psalm

is evidently a prophecy of the resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah. Whatever reference may be had to Solomon, there are several things which are not true, of either him or his government; and the whole is applicable to Christ, and is plentifully applied to him in the New Testament.

The *kings and judges of the earth*, who are here admonished to *serve the Lord* Messiah *with fear*, and to *kiss the Son lest he be angry*, are the same persons mentioned in verse 2, which words we find, in the New Testament, applied to *Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel:** that is, they were the enemies of Christ, unregenerate sinners; and such, for any thing that appears, they lived and died.

The command of God addressed to these rulers, is of a *spiritual* nature, including unfeigned faith in the Messiah, and sincere obedience to his authority. To *kiss the Son*, is to be reconciled to him, to embrace his word and ordinances, and bow to his sceptre. To *serve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling*, denote, that they should not think meanly of him, on the one hand; nor hypocritically cringe to him from a mere apprehension of his wrath, on the other; but sincerely embrace his government, and even *rejoice* that they had it to embrace. That which is here required of unbelievers, is the very spirit which distinguishes believers; a holy fear of Christ's majesty, and an humble confidence in his mercy; taking his yoke upon them, and wearing it as their highest delight. That the object of the command was spiritual, is also manifest from the threatening and the promise annexed to it, *lest ye perish from the way—blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* It is here plainly supposed, that, if they did embrace the Son, they should not perish from the way, and, if they did put their trust in him, they should be blessed. The result is, unconverted sinners are commanded to believe in Christ for salvation: therefore, believing in Christ for salvation is their duty.

Isaiah lv. 1—7. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not*

* Acts, iv. 27.

bread; and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knewest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. This is the language of invitation: but divine invitation implies an obligation to accept it; otherwise, the conduct of those who *made light* of the gospel supper, and preferred their farms and merchandise before it, had been guiltless.

The concluding verses of this passage express those things literally, which the foregoing ones described metaphorically: the persons invited, and the invitation, are the same in both. The *thirst* which they are supposed to possess, does not mean a holy desire after spiritual blessings, but the natural desire of happiness which God has implanted in every bosom; and which, in wicked men, is directed not to *the sure mercies of David*, but to that which *is not bread*, or which has no solid satisfaction in it. The *duty*, to a compliance with which they are so pathetically urged, is, a relinquishment of every false way, and a returning to God in His name who was given for *a witness, a leader, and a commander to the people;* which is the same thing as *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* The encouragements held up to induce a compliance with this duty, are, the freeness, the substantiality, the durableness, the certainty, and the rich abundance of those blessings, which as many as repent and believe the gospel shall receive. The whole passage is exceedingly explicit, as to the duty of the unconverted; neither is it possible to evade the force of it by any just or fair method of interpretation.

Jeremiah vi. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein.* The persons here addressed are, beyond all doubt, ungodly men. God himself bears witness of them, that *their ears were uncircumcised, and they could not hearken; for the word of the Lord was to them a reproach, and they had no delight in it.* ver. 10. Yea, so hardened were they, that *they were not ashamed when they had committed abomination*, and so impudent that *they could not blush.* ver. 15. And such, for any thing that appears, they continued; for when they were exhorted to *walk in the good way*, their answer was, *We will not walk therein.* Hence, the awful threatening which follows: *Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.* ver. 19.

The *good way*, in which they were directed to walk, must have been the same as that in which the patriarchs and prophets had walked in former ages; who, we all know, lived and died in the faith of the promised Messiah. Hence, our Lord, with great propriety, applied the passage to himself.* Jeremiah directed to *the old paths*, and *the good way*, as the only medium of finding rest to the soul: Jesus said, *Come unto* ME, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

We see in this passage also, as in many others, in what manner God requires sinners to *use the means of grace:* not by a mere attendance upon them, (which, while the end is disregarded, and the means rested in instead of it, is not using, but perverting them,) but with a sincere desire to find out the good way, and to walk in it. God requires no natural impossibilities. No man is required to believe in Christ, before he has opportunity of examining the evidence attending his gospel: but he ought to search into it, like the noble Bereans, immediately, and with a pure intention of finding and following the good way; which, if he do, like

* Matt. xi. 28.

them he will soon be found walking in it. If we teach sinners, that a mere attendance on the means of grace is that use of them which God requires at their hands, and in which consists the whole of their duty, as to repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be found false witnesses for God, and deceivers of the souls of men.

The New Testament is still more explicit than the Old. Faith in Jesus Christ, even that which is accompanied with salvation, is there constantly held up as the duty of all to whom the gospel is preached.

John xii. 36. *While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* The persons to whom this passage was addressed, were unbelievers; such who, *though Jesus had done so many miracles among them, yet believed not on him:* (ver. 37.) and it appears that they continued unbelievers, for they are represented as given over to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. (ver. 40.) The *light* which they were exhorted to believe in, appears to be himself, as revealed in the gospel; for thus he speaks in the context, *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not abide in darkness.* And that the believing which Christ required of them was such, as, had it been complied with, would have issued in their salvation, is manifest, from its being added, *that ye may be the children of light;* an appellation never bestowed on any but true believers.

John vi. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* These words contain an answer to a question. The persons who asked it were men who *followed Christ for loaves*, who *believed not*, and who, after this, *walked no more with him.* (ver. 26. 36. 66.) Christ had been rebuking them for their mercenary principles in thus following him about, and charging them, saying, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.* (ver. 27.) They replied, by asking, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* which was saying, in effect, 'We have been very zealous for thee in following thee hither and thither; yet thou dost not allow that we please God: thou directest us to *labour for that which en-*

dureth unto everlasting life. What wouldest thou have us do; what can we do; what must we do, in order to please God? To this question our Lord answers, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent:* which, if it be a proper answer, is the same as saying, This is the first and greatest of all duties; and, without it, no other duty can be acceptable.

It has been said, in answer to the argument from this passage, "The words contain a declaration, that believing in Christ for salvation is necessary to the enjoyment of eternal life, and that faith in him is an act acceptable and pleasing to God; but afford no proof, that it is required of men in a state of unregeneracy. To declare to unregenerate persons the necessity of faith, in order to salvation, which is what our blessed Lord here does, falls very far short of asserting it to be their present duty."*

We see, by this answer, that Mr. Brine, who will be allowed to have been one of the most judicious writers on that side the question, was fully convinced of three things. First: That the persons here addressed were unregenerate sinners. Secondly: That the faith recommended is saving. Thirdly: That, when faith is called the *work of God*, it does not mean the work which God *performs*, but an act of theirs, which would be *acceptable* and *pleasing* to him. Yet we are told, that our Lord merely expresses the *necessity* of it, without asserting it to be their present *duty*. Was it not the object of their inquiry, then, What was their present duty? or, What they ought to do, in order to please God? What else can be made of it? Further: How can our Lord be supposed, in answer to their question, to tell them of an act which was necessary, acceptable, and pleasing to God, but which was not their present duty? Is such an answer worthy of him? Nay, how could their believing be an act acceptable and pleasing to God, if it were not their present duty? God is pleased with that only in us which he requires at our hands.

John v. 23. *The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not*

* Mr. Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity, &c.* p. 42.

the Father which hath sent him. That men are obliged to honour the Father by a holy, hearty love to him, and adoration of him, under every character by which he has manifested himself, will be allowed by all, except the grossest Antinomians: and, if it be the will of the Father that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, nothing less can be required of them than a holy, hearty love to him, and adoration of him, under every character by which *he* has manifested himself. But such a regard to Christ necessarily supposes faith in him: for it is impossible to honour him, while we reject him in all or any of his offices, and neglect his great salvation. To honour an infallible teacher, is to place an implicit and unbounded confidence in all he says: to honour an advocate, is to commit our cause to him: to honour a physician, is to trust our lives in his hands: and to honour a king, is to bow to his sceptre, and cheerfully obey his laws. These are characters under which Christ has manifested himself. To treat him in this manner, is to honour him; and to treat him otherwise, is to dishonour him.

The scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, abound with exhortations to *hear* the word of God, to *hearken* to his counsel, to *wait* on him, to *seek* his favour, &c. all which imply saving faith. HEARKEN *unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.* HEAR *instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that* HEARETH *me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me, love death!—How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?* TURN *you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*—HEAR, *ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see.* HEARKEN *diligently unto me.* INCLINE *your ear, and come unto me:* HEAR, *and your soul shall live.*—SEEK *ye the Lord while he may be found,* CALL YE UPON HIM *while he is near. This is my beloved Son:* HEAR *him.—And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not* HEAR *that prophet, shall be destroyed from*

among the people. LABOUR *not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.**

It is a grievous misapplication of such language, to consider it as expressive of a mere attendance upon the means of grace, without any spiritual desire after God; and to allow that unregenerate sinners comply with it. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The scriptures abound in promises of spiritual and eternal blessings to those who thus *hearken*, *hear*, and *seek* after God: such exercises, therefore, must, of necessity, be spiritual, and require to be understood as including faith in Christ. The scriptures exhort to no such exercises as may be complied with by a mind at enmity with God: the duties which they inculcate, are all spiritual; and no sinner, while unregenerate, is supposed to comply with them.—So far from allowing that ungodly men *seek* after God, or do any *good thing*, they expressly declare the contrary. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did *understand*, that did *seek God*. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that *doeth good*, no, not one.† To reduce the exhortations of scripture to the level of a carnal mind, is to betray the authority of God over the human heart: and to allow that unconverted sinners comply with them, is to be aiding and abetting in their self-deception. The unconverted who attend the means of grace, generally persuade themselves, and wish to persuade others, that they would gladly be converted, and be real Christians, if it were but in their power. They imagine themselves to be waiting at the pool for the moving of the water, and, therefore, feel no guilt on account of their present state of mind. Doubtless, they are willing and desirous to escape the wrath to come; and, under certain convictions, would submit to relinquish many things, and to comply with other things, as the condition of it; but they have no direct desire after spiritual blessings. If they had, they would seek them in the name of Jesus, and, thus seeking, would find them. That preaching, therefore, which

* Prov. viii. 32—36. i. 22, 23. Isa. xlii. 18. lv. 2, 3, 6. Mark ix. 7. Acts iii. 23. John vi. 27.

† Psa. liii. 2. 3.

exhorts them to mere outward duties, and tells them that their only concern is, in this manner to wait at the pool, helps forward their delusion, and, should they perish, will prove accessary to their destruction.

Simon the sorcerer was admonished to *repent and pray to the Lord, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.* From this express example, many, who are averse from the doctrine here defended, have been so far convinced as to acknowledge, that it is the duty of the unconverted to pray, at least for temporal blessings: but Simon was not admonished to pray for temporal blessings, but for *the forgiveness of sin.* Neither was he to pray in a carnal and heartless manner; but to *repent*, and pray. And, being directed to *repent*, and pray for the *forgiveness of sin*, he was, in effect, directed to believe in Jesus: for in what other name could forgiveness be expected? Peter, after having declared to the Jewish rulers, that *there was none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*, cannot be supposed to have directed Simon to hope for forgiveness in any other way.

To admonish any person to pray, or to seek the divine favour, in any other way than by *faith in Jesus Christ*, is the same thing as to admonish them to follow the example of Cain, and of the self-righteous Jews. Cain was not averse from worship. He brought his offering: but, having no sense of the evil of sin, and of the need of a Saviour, he had taken no notice of what had been revealed concerning the promised seed, and paid no regard to the presenting of an expiatory sacrifice. He thanked God for temporal blessings, and might pray for their continuance: but this was not *doing well.* It was practically saying to his Maker, 'I have done nothing to deserve being made a sacrifice to thy displeasure: and I see no necessity for any sacrifice being offered up, either now or at the end of the world.' In short, it was claiming to approach God merely as a creature, and as though nothing had taken place which required an atonement. The self-righteous Jews did not live without religion: they followed after the law of righteousness; yet they did not attain it: and wherefore? *Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-*

stone. And shall we direct our hearers to follow this example by exhorting them to pray, and seek the divine favour, in any other way than by faith in Jesus Christ? If so, how can we deserve the name of Christian ministers?

The scriptures exhort sinners to put their *trust* in the Lord, and censure them for placing it in an arm of flesh. Whether trusting in Christ, for the salvation of our souls, be distinguishable from believing in him, or not; it certainly includes it. To trust in Christ is to believe in him: if, therefore, the one be required, the other must be. Those who *loved vanity, and sought after lying*, are admonished *to offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and to put their trust in the Lord*;* and a trust connected with the sacrifices of righteousness must be spiritual. To rely on any other object, is to *trust in vanity*, against which sinners are repeatedly warned:—*Trust not in oppression; become not vain in robbery.—He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.—Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*†

It is allowed, that, if God had never sent his Son into the world to save sinners, or, if the invitations of the gospel were not addressed to sinners indefinitely, there would be no warrant for trust in the divine mercy: and as it is, there is no warrant for trust, beyond what God has promised in his word. He has not promised to save sinners indiscriminately; and, therefore, it would be presumption in sinners indiscriminately to trust that they shall be saved. But he has promised, and that in great variety of language, that *whosoever, relinquishing every false ground of hope, shall come to Jesus as a perishing sinner, and rely on him alone for salvation, shall not be disappointed.* For such a reliance, therefore, there is a complete warrant. These promises are true, and will be fulfilled, whether we trust in them, or not: and whosoever still continues to trust in his own righteousness, or in the general mercy of his Creator without respect to the atonement, refusing to build upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion, is guilty of the greatest of all sins; and, if God give him not repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, the stone

* Psa. iv. 5. † Psa. lxii. 10. Prov. xxviii. 26. Jer. xvii. 5.

which he has refused will fall upon him, and grind him to powder.

But, "until a man through the law is dead to the law," says Mr. Brine, "he hath no *warrant* to receive Christ as a Saviour, or to hope for salvation through him."* If, by receiving Christ, were meant the *claiming an interest in the blessings of his salvation*, this objection would be well-founded. No man, while adhering to his own righteousness, as the ground of acceptance with God, has any warrant to conclude himself interested in the righteousness of Jesus. The scriptures every where assure him of the contrary. But the question is, Does he need any warrant to be *dead to the law*: or, which is the same thing, to relinquish his vain hopes of acceptance by the works of it, and to choose that Rock for his foundation, which is chosen of God and precious? To "receive" Christ, in the sense of scripture, stands opposed to *rejecting* him, or to such a non-reception of him, as was practised by the body of the Jewish nation.† An interest in spiritual blessings, and, of course, a persuasion of it, is represented as *following* the reception of Christ, and, consequently, is to be distinguished from it: *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* The idea that is generally attached to the term, in various cases to which the reception of Christ bears an allusion, corresponds with the above statement. To receive a *gift*, is not to believe it to be my own, though, after I have received it, it is so; but to have my pride so far abased, as not to be above it, and my heart so much attracted, as to be willing to relinquish every thing that stands in competition with it. To receive a *guest*, is not to believe him to be my particular friend, though such he may be; but to open my doors to him, and make him heartily welcome. To receive an *instructor*, is not to believe him to be my instructor any more than another's; but to embrace his instruction, and follow his counsel. For a town, or city, after a long siege, to receive a *king*, is not to believe him to be their special friend, though such he may be, and, in the end, they may see it; but to lay down their arms, throw open their gates, and come

* *Motives to Love and Unity*, pp. 38, 39. † John i. 11, 12.

under his government. These remarks are easily applied; and it is no less easy to perceive, that every sinner has not only a warrant thus to receive Christ, but, that it is his great sin, if he receive him not.

II. EVERY MAN IS BOUND CORDIALLY TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE WHATEVER GOD REVEALS.

It may be presumed, that, if God reveal any thing to men, it will be accompanied with such evidence of its being what it is, that no upright mind can continue to doubt of it. *He that is of God, heareth God's words.*

It will be allowed, by those with whom I am now reasoning, that no man is justifiable in disbelieving the truth of the gospel, or in positively rejecting it: but then it is supposed, that a belief of the gospel is not saving faith; and that, though a positive rejection of divine truth is sinful, yet a spiritual reception of it is not a duty. I hope it has been made to appear, in the former part of this piece, that a real belief of the doctrine of Christ *is* saving faith, and includes such a cordial acquiescence in the way of salvation, as has the promise of eternal life. But, be this as it may, whether the belief of the gospel be allowed to include a cordial acquiescence in God's way of salvation, or not, such an acquiescence will be allowed to include saving faith. "Acting faith," says Mr. Brine, "is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation."* If, therefore, it can be proved, that a cordial approbation of God's way of saving sinners is the duty of every one, it will amount to proving the same thing of saving faith.

I allow, there is a difficulty in this part of the work; but it is that which attends the proof of a truth which is nearly self-evident. Who could suppose, that Mr. Brine, after such an acknowledgment concerning faith, could doubt of its being the duty of all mankind? Ought we not, if we think of Christ at all, to think *suitably* of him? and are we justifiable in entertaining low and unsuitable thoughts of him? Is it not a matter of *complaint*, that the ungodly Jews *saw no form nor comeliness in him, nor beauty, that they should desire him?* And with respect to an *hearty choice* of him, as God's appoint-

* *Johnson's Mistakes Noted and Rectified*, p. 84.

ed way of salvation, if it be not the duty of sinners to choose him, it is their duty to refuse him, or to desire to be accepted of God by the works of their hands, in preference to him? Mr. Brine would censure men for this. So does Mr. Wayman. Speaking of self-righteous unbelievers, he says, "They plainly declare, that Christ is not all and in all to them, but that he comes in but at second-hand; and their regard is more unto themselves, and their dependence more upon their own doings, than upon the Mighty One upon whom God hath laid our help."* But, why thus complain of sinners for their not *choosing* Christ, if they be under no obligation to do so? Is there no sin in the invention of the various false schemes of religion, with which the Christian world abounds, to the exclusion of Christ? Why, then, are *heresies* reckoned among *the works of the flesh?*† If we are not obliged to think suitably of Christ, and to choose him whom the Lord and all good men have chosen, there can be no evil in these things: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

"A hearty choice of God's appointed way of salvation," is the same thing as falling in with its grand designs. Now, the grand designs of the salvation of Christ are, *the glory of God, the abasement of the sinner, and the destruction of his sins.* It is God's manifest purpose, in saving sinners, to save them in this way: and can any sinner be excused from cordially acquiescing in it? If any man properly regard the character of God, he must be willing that he should be glorified: if he knew his own unworthiness, as he ought to know it, he must also be willing to occupy that place which the gospel-way of salvation assigns him; and, if he be not wickedly wedded to his lusts, he must be willing to sacrifice them at the foot of the cross. He may be averse from each of these, and, while an unbeliever, is so: but he will not be able to acquit himself of guilt; and it is to be lamented, that any who sustain the character of Christian ministers should be employed in labouring to acquit him.

If a way of salvation were provided, which did *not* provide for the glory of God; which did *not* abase, but flatter the sinner; and which did *not* require him to sacrifice his lusts:

* *Further Inquiry*, p. 160. † Gal. v. 20.

he would feel no want of power to embrace it. Nominal Christians, and mere professors, in all ages, have shown themselves able to believe any thing but the truth. Thus it was with the carnal Jews; and thus our Lord plainly told them: —*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not:— If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.— Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God.** This is the true source of the innumerable false schemes of religion in the world, and the true reason why the gospel is not universally embraced.

Unbelievers are described as *disallowing* of him who is *chosen of God and precious*† Now, either to allow or disallow, supposes a claim. Christ claims to be the whole foundation of a sinner's hope; and God claims, on his behalf, that he be treated as *the head of the corner*. But the heart of unbelievers cannot allow of the claim. The Jewish builders set him at naught; and every self-righteous heart follows their example. God, to express his displeasure at this conduct, assures them, that their unbelief shall affect none but themselves; it shall not deprive the Saviour of his honours: *for the stone which they refuse*, notwithstanding their opposition, *shall become the head of the corner*. What can be made of all this, but, that they *ought* to have allowed him the place which he so justly claimed, and to have chosen him whom the Lord had chosen? On no other ground could the scripture censure them as it does; and on no other principle could they be characterized as *disobedient:* for all disobedience consists in a breach of duty.

Believers, on the other hand, are described as thinking highly of Christ; reckoning themselves unworthy to *unloose the latchet of his shoes*, or that he should *come under their roof;* treating his gospel as *worthy of all acceptation, and counting all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him*. They are of the same mind with the blessed above, who sing his praise, *saying with a loud voice*, Wor-

* John v. 43. viii. 45—47. † 1 Peter ii. 4—7.

THY *is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* In fine, they are of the same mind with God himself: him whom God has chosen, they choose; and he that is *precious* in his sight, is *precious* in theirs.* And do they overestimate his character? Is he not worthy of all the honour they ascribe to him; of all the affection they exercise towards him; and that, whether he actually receive it, or not? If all the angels had been of the mind of Satan, and all the saints of the spirit of the unbelieving Israelites, who were not gathered; yet would he have been *glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* The belief or unbelief of creatures makes no difference as to his worthiness, or their obligation to ascribe it to him.

It is allowed by all, except the grossest Antinomians, that every man is obliged to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength; and this, notwithstanding the depravity of his nature. But to love God with all the heart, is to love him *in every character in which he has made himself known; and, more especially, in those wherein his moral excellencies appear with the brightest lustre.* The same law that obliged Adam, in innocence, to love God in all his perfections, as displayed in the works of creation, obliged Moses and Israel to love him in all the glorious displays of himself in his wonderful works of providence, of which they were witnesses. And the same law, that obliged them to love him in those discoveries of himself, obliges us to love him in other discoveries, by which he has since more gloriously appeared, as *saving sinners through the death of his Son.* To suppose, that we are obliged to love God as manifesting himself in the works of creation and providence, but not in the work of redemption; is to suppose, that, in the highest and most glorious display of himself, he deserves no regard. The same perfections, which appear in all his other works, and render him lovely, appear in this with a ten-fold lustre: to be obliged to love him on acccount of the one, and not of the other, is not a little extraordinary.

* Mark i. 7. 1 Tim. i. 15, Phil. iii. 8. Rev. v. 12. 1 Peter ii. 4—7.

As these things cannot be separated in point of obligation, so neither can they *in fact*. He that loves God for any excellency, as manifested in one form, must, of necessity, love him for that excellency, let it be manifested in what form it may; and the brighter the display, the stronger will be his love. This remark is verified in the holy angels. At first, they loved their Maker, for what they saw in his works of creation. They saw him lay the foundation of the earth, and they SHOUTED FOR JOY. In process of time, they witnessed the glorious displays of his moral character in the government of the world which he had made; and now their love increases. On every new occasion, they cry, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HOSTS: THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY. At length, they beheld an event, to the accomplishment of which all former events were subservient; they saw the Messiah born in Bethlehem. And now their love rises still higher. As though heaven could not contain them on such an occasion, they resort to the place, and contemplate the good that should arise to the moral system, bursting forth into a song: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN. All this was but the natural operation of love to God; and, from the same principle, they took delight in attending the Redeemer through his life, strengthening him in his sufferings, watching at his tomb, conducting him to glory, and *looking into* the mysteries of redemption. With a heart like theirs, is it possible to conceive, that we should continue impenitent or unbelieving? If, in our circumstances, we possessed that love to God by which they were influenced, it would melt us into holy lamentation for having sinned against him. If the gospel-invitation to partake of the water of life once sounded in our ears, we should instantly imbibe it. Instead of making *light of it*, and preferring our *farms* and our *merchandise* before it, we should embrace it with our whole heart. Let any creature be affected towards God as the holy angels are, and if he had a thousand souls to be saved, and the invitation extended to every one that is willing, he would not hesitate a moment, whether he should rely on his salvation. It is owing to a want of love to God, that any man continues impenitent or unbelieving. This was plain-

ly intimated, by our Lord, to the Jews: *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.* It is impossible to love God, and not to embrace the greatest friend of God that ever existed; or to love his law, and not approve of a system which, above all things, tends to magnify and make it honourable.

"The affections included in divine love," says an able writer, "are founded on those truths for which there is the greatest evidence in the world. Every thing in the world, that proves the being of God, proves that his creatures should love him with all their hearts. The evidence for these things is, in *itself*, very strong, and level to every capacity. Where it does not beget conviction, it is not owing to the weakness of men's capacities; but the strength of their prejudices and prepossessions. Whatever proves that reasonable creatures are *obliged* to love God and his law, proves that sinners are *obliged* to suitable hatred of sin, and abasement for it. A sinner cannot have due prevalent love to God, and hatred of sin, without prevalent *desire of obtaining deliverance from sin, and the enjoyment of God.* A suitable desire of so important ends cannot be without proportionable desire of the *necessary means.* If a sinner, therefore, who hears the gospel, have these suitable affections, of love to God, and hatred of sin, to which he is obliged by the laws of natural religion; *these things cannot be separated from a real complacency in that redemption and grace which are proposed in revealed religion.* This does not suppose that natural religion can discover, or prove, the peculiar things of the gospel to be true; but, when they are discovered, it proves them to be infinitely desirable. A book of laws that are enforced with awful sanctions, cannot prove that the sovereign has passed an act of grace, or indemnity, in favour of transgressors: but it proves, that such favour is, to them, the most desirable and the most necessary thing in the world. It proves, that the way of saving us from sin, which the gospel reveals, is infinitely suitable to the honour of God, to the dignity of his law, and to the exigencies of the consciences of sinners."*

"If any man has a taste for moral excellency," says an-

* M'Laurin's *Essay on Grace*, p. 342.

other, "a heart to account God glorious for being what he is; he cannot but see the moral excellency of the *law*, and love it, and conform to it, because it is the image of God; and so he cannot but see the moral excellency of the *gospel*, and believe it, and love it, and comply with it; for it is also the image of God: he that can see the moral beauty in the original, cannot but see the moral beauty of the image drawn to life He, therefore, that despises the gospel, and is an enemy to the law, even he is at enmity against God himself. (Rom. viii. 7.) Ignorance of the glory of God, and enmity against him, make men ignorant of the glory of the law and of the gospel, and enemies to both. Did men know and *love him that begat, they would love that which is begotten of him.* (1 John v. 1.) *He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.* (John viii. 47.)"*

III. THOUGH THE GOSPEL, STRICTLY SPEAKING, IS NOT A LAW, BUT A MESSAGE OF PURE GRACE; YET IT VIRTUALLY REQUIRES OBEDIENCE, AND SUCH AN OBEDIENCE AS INCLUDES SAVING FAITH.

It is no uncommon thing to distinguish between a formal requisition, and that which affords the *ground*, or *reason*, of that requisition. The *goodness* of God, for instance, though it is not a law, or formal precept, yet virtually requires a return of gratitude. It deserves it: and the law of God formally requires it, on his behalf. Thus it is with respect to the gospel, which is the greatest overflow of divine goodness that was ever displayed. A return suitable to its nature is required *virtually* by the gospel itself; and *formally* by the divine precept, on its behalf.

I suppose it might be taken for granted, that the gospel possesses some degree of virtual authority; as it is generally acknowledged, that, by reason of the dignity of its Author, and the importance of its subject-matter, it deserves the *audience* and *attention* of all mankind; yea, more, that all mankind, who have opportunity of hearing it, are obliged to believe it. The only question, therefore, is, whether the faith which it requires be spiritual, or such as has the promise of salvation?

* Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated*, p. 332.

We may form some idea of the manner in which the gospel ought to be received, from its being represented as an *embassy*. *We are ambassadors for Christ*, saith the apostle, *as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye* RECONCILED *to God*.* The object of an embassy, in all cases, is peace. Ambassadors are sometimes employed between friendly powers, for the adjustment of their affairs: but the allusion, in this case, is manifestly to a righteous prince, who should condescend to speak peaceably to his rebellious subjects, and, as it were, to entreat them, for their own sakes, to be reconciled. The language of the Apostle supposes that the world is engaged in an unnatural and unprovoked rebellion against its Maker; that it is in his power utterly to destroy sinners; that, if he were to deal with them according to their deserts, this must be their portion: but that, through the mediation of his Son, he had, as it were, suspended hostilities, had sent his servants with words of peace, and commissioned them to persuade, to entreat, and even to beseech them to be reconciled. But *reconciliation* to God includes every thing that belongs to true conversion. It is the opposite of a state of *alienation and enmity* to him.† It includes a justification of his government, a condemnation of their own unprovoked rebellion against him, and a thankful reception of the message of peace; which is the same, for substance, as to *repent, and believe the gospel*. To speak of an embassy from the God of heaven and earth to his rebellious creatures being entitled to nothing more than an *audience*, or a decent *attention*, must itself be highly offensive to the honour of his majesty; and that such language should proceed from his professed friends, must render it still more so.

"When the Apostle beseecheth us to be *reconciled* to God, I would know," says Dr. Owen, "whether it be not a part of our duty to yield obedience? If not, the exhortation is frivolous and vain."‡ If sinners are not obliged to be reconciled to God, both as a law-giver and a Saviour, and that with all their hearts, it is no sin to be unreconciled. All the enmity of their hearts to God, his law, his gospel, or his Son,

* 2 Cor. v. 20. † Col. i. 21.

‡ *Display of Arminianism*, Chap. X.

must be guiltless. For there can be no neutrality in this case: not to be reconciled, is to be unreconciled; not to fall in with the message of peace, is to fall out with it; and not to lay down arms, and submit to mercy, is to maintain the war.

It is in perfect harmony with the foregoing ideas, that those who acquiesce in the way of salvation in this spiritual manner, are represented, in so doing, as exercising OBEDIENCE: as *obeying the gospel*, *obeying the truth*, and *obeying Christ*.* The very end of the gospel being preached is said to be, for *obedience to the faith among all nations*.† But *obedience* supposes previous obligation. If repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, were not duties required of us, even prior to all consideration of their being blessings bestowed upon us, it were incongruous to speak of them as exercises of *obedience*. Nor would it be less so, to speak of that impenitence and unbelief, which expose men to *eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, as consisting in their not *obeying the gospel*.‡ The passage on which the former part of this argument is founded, (viz. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) has been thought inapplicable to the subject, because it is supposed to be *an address to the members of the church at Corinth*, who were considered by the Apostle as believers. On this principle, Dr. Gill expounds the reconciliation exhorted to, submission to *providence*, and obedience to the *discipline* and *ordinances* of God. But let it be considered, whether the Apostle be here immediately addressing the members of the church at Corinth, beseeching them, at that time, to be reconciled to God; or, whether he be not rather *rehearsing to them what had been his conduct, and that of his brethren in the ministry, in vindication of himself and them from the base insinuations of false teachers;* to whom the great evils that had crept into that church, had been principally owing. The methods they appear to have taken to supplant the apostles, were those of underhand insinuation. By Paul's answers, they appear to have suggested, that he and his friends were either subtle men, who, by their *soft* and *beseeching* style, ingratiated themselves into the esteem of the simple, catching them, as it were, *with*

* Rom. x. 16. vi. 17. † Rom. i. 5. ‡ 2 Thes. i. 8, 9.

guile; (2 Cor. i. 12. xii. 16.) or weak-headed enthusiasts, *beside themselves*, (chap. v. 13.) going up and down, *beseeching* people to this and that; (chap. xi. 21.) and that, as to Paul himself, however great he might appear in his *letters*, he was nothing in company: *His bodily presence, say they, is weak, and his speech contemptible.*

In the first Epistle to this church, Paul generously waived a defence of himself and his brethren; being more concerned for the recovery of those to Christ, who were in danger of being drawn off from the truth as it is in Jesus, than respecting their opinion of him; yet, when the one was accomplished, he undertook the other; not only as a justification of himself and his brethren, but as knowing, that just sentiments of faithful ministers bore an intimate connexion with the spiritual welfare of their hearers. It is thus that the Apostle alludes to their various insinuations, acknowledging that they did indeed *beseech*, *entreat*, and *persuade* men; but affirming that such conduct arose not from the motives of which they were accused, but from the *love of Christ—If we are beside ourselves, it is for your sakes.*

If the words in chap v. 19, 20, be an immediate address to the *members* of the church at Corinth, those which follow in chap. vi. 1. must be an address to its ministers; and thus Dr. Gill expounds it. But, if so, the Apostle, in the continuation of that address, would not have said as he does, *In all things approving* OURSELVES *as the ministers of God:* his language would have been, In all things approving YOURSELVES, &c. Hence, it is manifest, that the whole is a vindication of their preaching and manner of life, against the insinuations of the Corinthian teachers.

There are two things which may have contributed to the misunderstanding of this passage of scripture: one is, the supplement *you*, which is unnecessarily introduced three times over in chap. v. 20, and vi. 1. If any supplement had been necessary, the word *men*, as it is in the text of chap. v. 11, might have better conveyed the Apostle's meaning. The other is, the division of the fifth and sixth chapters in the midst of the argument.*

* See Dr. Guyse on the place.

IV. THE WANT OF FAITH IN CHRIST IS ASCRIBED, IN THE SCRIPTURES, TO MEN'S DEPRAVITY, AND IS ITSELF REPRESENTED AS A HEINOUS SIN.

It is taken for granted, that whatever is not a sinner's duty, the omission of it cannot be charged on him as a sin, nor imputed to any depravity in him. If faith were no more a duty than *election* or *redemption*, which are acts peculiar to God; the want of the one would be no more ascribed to the evil dispositions of the heart, than of the other. Or, if the inability of sinners to believe in Christ, were of the same nature as that of a dead body in a grave to rise up and walk, it were absurd to suppose, that they would, on this account, fall under the divine censure. No man is reproved for not doing that which is naturally impossible: but sinners are reproved for not believing, and given to understand, that it is solely owing to their criminal ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, and aversion from God.

Voluntary ignorance is represented as a reason why sinners believe not. *Being* IGNORANT *of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,* THEY HAVE NOT SUBMITTED THEMSELVES UNTO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.—*If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath* BLINDED THE MINDS OF THEM THAT BELIEVE NOT, *lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.** To the same purpose, we are taught by our Lord, in the parable of the sower, *when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and* UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT, *then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart;* and this, as Luke expresses it, *lest they should* BELIEVE AND BE SAVED.†

If men, even though they were possessed of the same principles as our first father in paradise, would, nevertheless, be blind to the glory of the gospel; with what propriety is their blindness attributed to the god of this world? Is he ever represented as employing himself in hindering that which is naturally impossible, or in promoting that which is innocent?

Pride is another cause to which the want of saving faith is

* Rom. x. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. † Matt. xiii. 19. Luke viii. 12.

ascribed. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek. God is not in all his thoughts.** We have seen already, that *seeking* God is a spiritual exercise, which implies faith in the Mediator: and the reason why ungodly men are strangers to it is, the haughtiness of their spirits; which makes them scorn to take the place of supplicants before their offended Creator, and labour to put far from their minds every thought of him. *How can ye* BELIEVE, said our Lord to the Jews, *who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only.*†

If believing were here to be taken for any other faith than that which is spiritual or saving, the suggestion would not hold good: for we are told of some who *could* and *did* believe in Christ, in some sense, but who did not confess him; for they *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*‡ It was *pride* that blinded the minds of the *wise and prudent of this world* to the doctrines of Christ; and what is it but this same proud spirit, working in a way of self-conceit and self-righteousness, that still forms the grand objection to the doctrine of salvation by mere grace?

Dishonesty of heart is that on account of which men receive not the word of God, so as to bring forth fruit. This is fully implied in the parable of the sower, recorded in the eighth chapter of Luke. The reason why those hearers represented by the good ground, received the word, and brought forth fruit, rather than the others, was, they had *good and honest hearts;* plainly intimating, that the reason why the others did not so receive it, was, their hearts were not *upright* before God. Indeed such is the nature of divine truth, that every heart which is honest towards God must receive it. An honest heart must needs approve of God's holy law, which requires us to love him with all our powers; and this, because it is no more than giving him the glory *due* to his name. An honest heart will approve of being justified wholly for Christ's sake, and not on account of any of its own works, whether legal or evangelical; for it is no more than relinquishing a claim which is *justly* forfeited, and accepting, as a free gift, that which God was under no obligation to

* Psalm x. 4. † John v. 44. ‡ John xii. 43.

bestow. Further: An honest heart must rejoice in the way of salvation, as soon as he understands it; because it provides a way in which mercy can be exercised *consistently with righteousness*. A right spirit would revolt at the idea of receiving mercy itself, in a way that should leave a blot upon the divine character. It is the glory of Christ, that he has not an honest man for an enemy. *The upright love him.*

We are not ignorant who it is that must now give men honest hearts, and what is the source of every thing, in a fallen creature, that is truly good; but this does not affect the argument. However far sinners are from it, and whatever divine agency it may require to produce it, no man who is not disposed to deny the accountableness of creatures to the God that made them, will deny that it is their duty: for if we are not obliged to be upright towards God, we are obliged to nothing; and if obliged to nothing, we must be guiltless, and so stand in no need of salvation.

Finally: *Aversion of heart* is assigned as a reason why sinners do not believe. This truth is strongly expressed in that complaint of our Lord, in John v. 40. *Ye will not*, or YE ARE NOT WILLING *to come unto me, that ye might have life.* Proudly attached to their own righteousness, when Jesus exhibited himself as *the way, the truth, and the life*, they were stumbled at it; and thousands, in the religious world, are the same to this day. They are willing to escape God's wrath, and to gain his favour; yea, and to relinquish many an outward vice, in order to it: but to *come to Jesus* among the chief of sinners, and be indebted wholly to his sacrifice for life, they are *not willing*. Yet, can any man plead that this their unwillingness is innocent?

Mr. Hussey understands the foregoing passage, of barely owning Christ to be the Messiah; which, he says, would have saved them, as a nation, from temporal ruin and *death;* or, as he in another place expresses it, "from having their brains dashed out by the battering rams of Titus," the Roman general.* But it ought to be observed, that the life for which they were *not willing* to come to him, was the same as that which they thought they had in the scriptures; and this was

* *Glory of Christ Revealed,* pp. 527. 615.

eternal life.—*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me: and ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.* This was the same as saying, 'These very scriptures, in which ye think ye have eternal life, testify of me, as the only way to it; but such is the pride and aversion of your hearts, that ye will not come to me for it.'

Dr. Gill, in general, opposed these principles; yet frequently, when his system was out of sight, he established them. His exposition of this passage is a proof of this remark. He tells us, that the "perverseness of their wills was blame-worthy, being owing to the corruption and vitiosity of their nature; which being blame-worthy in them, that which follows upon it must be so too."

There is no inconsistency between this account of things, and that which is given elsewhere, that *no man* CAN *come to Christ, except the Father draw him.** No man *can* choose that from which his heart is averse. It is common, both in scripture and in conversation, to speak of a person who is under the influence of an evil bias of heart, as unable to do that which is inconsistent with it. *They have eyes full of adultery, and* CANNOT *cease from sin.—The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed* CAN *be. So then they that are in the flesh* CANNOT *please God.*†

On account of this different phraseology, some writers have affirmed that men are under both a moral and a natural inability of coming to Christ; or that they *neither will nor can* come to him: but, if there be no other inability than what arises from aversion, this language is not accurate: for it conveys the idea, that, if all aversion of heart were removed, there would still be a natural and insurmountable bar in the way. But no such idea as this is conveyed by our Lord's words: the only bar to which he refers, lies in that *reluctance*, or *aversion*, which the *drawing* of the Father implies and removes. Nor will such an idea comport with what he elsewhere teaches. *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I*

* John vi. 44. † Rom. viii. 7, 8.

say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Why do ye not understand my speech? BECAUSE YE CANNOT HEAR MY WORD. These cutting interrogations proceed on the supposition that they *could have received the doctrine of Christ, if it had been agreeable to their corrupt hearts: and its being otherwise was the* ONLY *reason why they could not understand and believe it.* If sinners were naturally and absolutely unable to believe in Christ, they would be equally unable to disbelieve: for it requires the same powers to reject, as to embrace. And, in this case, there would be no room for an inability of another kind: a dead body is equally unable to do evil, as to do good; and a man naturally and absolutely blind could not be guilty of shutting his eyes against the light. "It is indwelling sin," as Dr. Owen says, "that both disenableth men unto, and hinders them from believing, AND THAT ALONE. Blindness of mind, stubbornness of the will, sensuality of the affections, all concur to keep poor perishing souls at a distance from Christ. Men are made blind by sin, and cannot see his excellency; obstinate, and will not lay hold of his righteousness; senseless, and take no notice of their eternal concernments."*

A voluntary and judicial blindness, obstinacy, and hardness of heart, are represented as the bar to conversion.† But, if that spirit which is exercised in conversion, were essentially different from any thing which the subjects of it, in any state, possessed, or ought to have possessed, it were absurd to ascribe the want of it to such causes.

Those who embraced the gospel, and submitted to the government of the Messiah, were baptized with the baptism of John, and are said, in so doing, to have *justified* God: their conduct was an acknowledgment of the justice of the law, and of the wisdom and love of the gospel. On the other hand, those who did not thus submit, are said to have *rejected the counsel of God against themselves*, not being baptized.‡ But no Christian, I suppose, (certainly no Baptist,) thinks it

* *On Indwelling Sin*, Chap. XVI. † Acts xxviii. 27.
‡ Luke vii. 29, 30.

was their sin not to be baptized, while they continued enemies to Christ; and, probably, very few, if any, serious Pædobaptists would contend for its being the duty of *adults* to be baptized in Christ's name, without first embracing his word. How, then, can this passage be understood, but by supposing that they *ought* to have repented of their sins, embraced the Messiah, and submitted to his ordinances? Nor can the force of the argument be evaded, by distinguishing between different kinds of repentance and faith: for a profession of true repentance, and of faith unfeigned, was required in order to baptism.

Finally: *Unbelief is expressly declared to be a sin of which the Spirit of truth has to convince the world.** But unbelief cannot be a sin, if faith were not a duty. I know of no answer to this argument, but what must be drawn from a distinction between believing the report of the gospel, and saving faith; allowing the want of the one to be sinful, but not of the other. But it is not of gross unbelief only, or of an open rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, that the Holy Spirit has to convince the world; nor is it to a bare conviction of this truth, like what prevails in all Christian countries, that men are brought by his teaching. When he, the Spirit of truth, cometh, his operations are *deeper* than this amounts to: it is of an *opposition of heart* to the way of salvation that he convinces the sinner, and to a cordial acquiescence with it that he brings him. Those who are born in a Christian land, and who never were the subjects of gross infidelity, stand in no less need of being thus convinced, than others. Nay, in some respects they need it more. Their unbelieving opposition to Christ is more subtile, refined, and out of sight, than that of open infidels: they are less apt, therefore, to suspect themselves of it; and, consequently, stand in greater need of the Holy Spirit to search them out, and show them to themselves. Amongst those who constantly sit under the gospel, and who remain in an unconverted state, there are few who think themselves the enemies of Christ. On the contrary, they flatter themselves that they are willing, at any time, to be converted, if God would but convert them; considering themselves

* John xvi. 8, 9.

as lying at the pool for the moving of the waters. But *when he the Spirit of truth cometh*, these coverings will be stripped from off the face, and these refuges of lies will fail.*

V. GOD HAS THREATENED AND INFLICTED THE MOST AWFUL PUNISHMENTS ON SINNERS, FOR THEIR NOT BELIEVING ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is here taken for granted, that nothing but sin can be the cause of God's inflicting punishment: and nothing can be sin, which is not a breach of duty.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT, SHALL BE DAMNED.† This awful passage appears to be a kind of *ultimatum*, or last resolve. It is as if our Lord had said, 'This is your message . . . . go and proclaim it to all nations: whosoever receives it, and submits to my authority, assure him, from me, that eternal salvation awaits him: but whosoever rejects it, let him see to it . . . . damnation shall be his portion!' *Believing* and *not believing*, in this passage, serve to explain each other. It is saving faith to which salvation is promised; and to the want of this it is that damnation is threatened.

It has been alleged, that, "as it is not inferrible, from that declaration, that the faith of believers is the procuring cause of their salvation; so it is not to be inferred, from thence, that the want of that *special* faith in unbelievers is the procuring cause of their damnation. That declaration contains in it the descriptive characters of those who are saved, and of those who are damned; but it assigns not special faith to be the procuring cause of the salvation of the former, nor the want of it to be the procuring cause of the damnation of the latter."‡

But, if this mode of reasoning were admitted, we should find it very difficult, if not impossible, to prove any thing to be evil, from the threatenings of God against it. A multitude of plain texts of scripture, wherein sin, as any com-

* See Charnock's excellent discourse, on *Unbelief the Greatest Sin*, from the above passage, Vol. II. of his Works.

† Mark xvi. 15, 16.

‡ Mr. Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity*, pp. 31, 32.

mon reader would suppose, is threatened with punishment, might, in this manner, be made to teach nothing with regard to its being the procuring cause of it. For example, Psalm xxxvii. 18. 20. *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.* But it might be said, as the uprightness of the upright is not the procuring cause of his enjoying an everlasting inheritance; so neither will this prove that the wickedness of the wicked, or the enmity of the Lord's enemies, is the procuring cause of their being consumed. Again, Psalm cxlvii. 6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.* But it might be alleged, that, as the meekness of the former is not the procuring cause of his being lifted up; so it cannot be, from hence, inferred, that the wickedness of the latter is the procuring cause of his being cast down. Again, Psalm cxlv. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.* But it might be said, as the love of the one is not the procuring cause of his preservation; so it cannot be proved, from hence, that the wickedness of the other is the procuring cause of his destruction; and that these declarations contain only the *descriptive characters* of those who are saved, and of those who perish.

In this manner, almost all the threatenings in the book of God might be made to say nothing *as threatenings;* for the mode in which they are delivered is the same as that in the passage in question. For example, *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.—He that showeth no mercy, shall have judgment without mercy.—Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.—Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.—Behold, the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.—Bring hither those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, and*

slay them before me.—The fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.— But none of these awful threatenings declare that the respective crimes which are mentioned are the procuring cause of the evils denounced. Though it is said, concerning the *false tongue*, that *sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper, shall be given him;* yet it does not say that these shall be given him *because of his falsehood:* and so on, of the rest. And thus they may be only *descriptive characters* of those who shall be damned; and all these things may, for aught these denunciations prove, be blameless. If this reasoning be just, it cannot be inferred, from the laws of England declaring that a murderer shall be put to death, that it is *on account* of his being a murderer. Neither could our first parents justly infer, from its being told them, *The day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die*, that it should be *on that account.*

The truth is, though eternal life be the *gift of God*, yet eternal death is the proper WAGES of sin: and, though faith is not represented, in the above passage, as the procuring cause of salvation, yet unbelief is of damnation. It is common for the scriptures to describe those that shall be saved, by something which is pleasing to God, and by which they are made meet for glory; and those that shall be lost, by something which is displeasing to God, and by which they are fitted for destruction.

John iii. 18. *He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already,* BECAUSE *he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.* Two things are here observable. First: *Believing* is expressive of saving faith, seeing it exempts from *condemnation.* Secondly: The want of this faith is a sin, on account of which the unbeliever stands condemned. It is true, that unbelief is an *evidence* of our being under the condemnation of God's righteous law for all our *other sins;* but this is not all: unbelief is *itself* a sin, which greatly aggravates our guilt, and which, if persisted in, gives the finishing stroke to our destruction. That this idea is taught by the Evangelist appears, partly from his dwelling upon the dignity of the

character offended, *the only-begotten Son of God;* and partly from his expressly adding, *this is* THE CONDEMNATION, *that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

Luke xix. 27. *But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* If Christ, as wearing his mediatorial crown, has not a right to unreserved submission and hearty obedience, he has no right to be angry; and still less to punish men as his enemies, for not being willing that he should reign over them. He has no right to reign over them, at least not over their hearts, if it be not their duty to obey him from their hearts. The whole controversy, indeed, might be reduced to an issue on this argument. Every sinner ought to be Christ's friend, or his enemy, or to stand by as neutral. To say he ought to be his enemy, is too gross to be defended. To plead for his being neutral, is pleading for what our Lord declares to be impossible: *he that is not with me, is against me.* There is, therefore, no room for any other position, than that he ought to be his cordial friend; and this is the plain implication of the passage.

2 Thes. ii. 10—12. *Whose coming is—with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*— From hence, we may remark two things: First: That faith is here called a *receiving the love of the truth:* and that it means saving faith, is manifest, seeing it is added, *that they might be saved.* Secondly: That their not receiving the love of the truth, or, which is the same thing, not believing with such a faith as that to which salvation is promised, was the *cause* of their being given up of God, and carried away with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. The loose and cold-hearted manner in which merely nominal Christians held the truth, would occasion the introduction of the grand Papal apostacy, by which great numbers of them would be swept away. And this, assuredly, ought to afford a lesson to nominal Christians of the present day, who, owing to the same

cause, are fast approaching to Infidelity. But unless we suppose that these professors of religion ought to have *received the love of the truth*, there is no accounting for the awful judgments of God upon them for the contrary.

VI OTHER SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, WHICH SUSTAIN AN INSEPARABLE CONNEXION WITH FAITH IN CHRIST, ARE REPRESENTED AS THE DUTY OF MEN IN GENERAL.

Though this controversy has been mostly carried on with respect to the duty of *faith;* yet it, in reality, extends to the whole of spiritual religion. Those who deny that sinners are obliged to believe in Christ for salvation, will not allow that it is their duty to do any thing truly and spiritually good. It is a kind of maxim with such persons, that 'none can be obliged to act spiritually, but spiritual men.' *Spiritual* exercises appear, to me, to mean the same as *holy* exercises; for the *new man which is created after God*, is said to be *created in righteousness, and* TRUE HOLINESS: and as to two kinds of true holiness, the scriptures, I believe, are silent. But, as my opponents affix different ideas to the term spiritual, to prevent all disputes about it, I shall proceed on a ground which they will not refuse. *Whatever has the promise of spiritual blessings, is considered as a spiritual exercise.* With this criterion of spirituality in view, let the following passages of scripture be carefully considered. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity; and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.—Wisdom crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.—Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.—Hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not: Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and*

shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death. —*And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to* FEAR *the Lord thy God, to walk in* ALL *his ways, and to* LOVE *him, and to* SERVE *the Lord thy God with* ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL?—*Circumcise, therefore, the fore-skin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.—Rend your* HEART, *and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.—Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* —REPENT *ye, therefore, and be* CONVERTED, *that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.**

We may remark on these passages, First: The persons addressed were *unconverted sinners;* as appears by their characters: *fools—scorners—haters of knowledge—uncircumcised in heart—impenitent.* Secondly: The things to which they were exhorted were things *spiritually good.* This appears, in part, from the names by which the exercises themselves are denominated; namely, such understanding as originates in *the fear of the Lord—fearing—loving—serving God with all the heart, and with all the soul—circumcision of the heart —repentance—conversion:* and, partly, from the blessings of salvation being promised to them: these are expressed by the terms, *blessedness—life—favour of the Lord—the blotting out of sin.*

More particularly: *The love of God* is a spiritual exercise; for it has the promise of spiritual blessings. *All things work together for good to them that love God.—He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.—Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*† But the love of God is required of men, without distinction. The people of Israel, like all other people, were composed of good and bad men; but they were all required to *love* Jehovah, and to *cleave* to him, and that with *all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.*‡ The moral part of these pre-

* Prov. i. 22, 23. 7. viii. 3—6. 10. 32—36. Deut. x. 12. 16. Joel ii. 13. Matt. iii. 2. Acts iii. 19.

† Rom. viii. 28. 1 John iv. 16. 1 Cor. ii. 9. ‡ Deut. vi. 5. xxx. 20.

cepts which God gave to them on tables of stone, were binding on all mankind. Even those who had no other means of knowing God than were afforded by the works of nature, with, perhaps, a portion of tradition, were required to GLORIFY HIM AS GOD, AND TO BE THANKFUL.*

The love of God, as is here intimated, is either a holy *thankfulness* for the innumerable instances of his goodness, or a cordial approbation of his *glorious character*. It is true, there are favours for which the regenerate are obliged to love him, which are not common to the unregenerate: but every one has shared a sufficient portion of his bounty to have incurred a debt of gratitude. It is generally allowed, indeed, by our opponents, that God ought to be loved as our Creator and benefactor: but this, they suppose, is not a spiritual exercise. There is a kind of gratitude, it is granted, which is not spiritual, but merely the effect of natural self-love, and in which God is no otherwise regarded, than as subservient to our happiness. But this does not always respect the bestowing of temporal mercies: the same feelings which possessed the carnal Israelites, when they felt themselves delivered from Pharaoh's yoke, and saw their oppressors sinking in the sea, are still the feelings of many professors of religion, under a groundless persuasion of their being elected of God, and having their sins forgiven them. Gratitude of this sort has nothing spiritual in it: but then, neither is it any part of duty. God no where requires it, either of saints or sinners. That which God requires is a *spiritual* exercise; whether it be on account of temporal or spiritual mercies, is immaterial; the object makes no difference as to the nature of the act: that *thanksgiving* with which the common mercies of life are received by the godly, and by which they are *sanctified* to them,† is no less of a spiritual nature, and is no less connected with eternal life, than gratitude for the forgiveness of sin. This thankful spirit, instead of being an operation of self-love, or regarding God merely in subserviency to our own happiness, greatly consists in self-abasement, or in a sense of our own unworthiness. Its language is, *Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hith-*

* Rom. i. 21. † 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

erto?—What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits? This is *holy* gratitude; and to be destitute of it, is to be *unthankful, unholy.*

With respect to *a cordial approbation of the divine character, or glorifying God as God,* and which enters into the essence of holy love, there can be no reasonable doubt whether it be obligatory on sinners. Such is the glory of God's *name,* that nothing but the most inexcusable and deep-rooted depravity could render any intelligent creature insensible to it. Those parts of scripture which describe the devout feelings of godly men, particularly the Psalms of David, abound in expressions of affection to the NAME of the Lord. *How excellent is thy* NAME *in all the earth!—Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy* NAME *give glory.—O magnify the Lord with me; and let us exalt his* NAME *together.—Sing unto God, sing praises to his* NAME: *let them that love thy* NAME *say continually, the Lord be magnified.—Blessed be his glorious* NAME *for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen.*

This affection to the *name* of the Lord, as it is revealed in his word and works, and particularly in the work of redemption, lies at the foundation of all true desire after an interest in his mercy. If we seek mercy of any one whose character we disesteem, it is merely for our own sakes; and if he be acquainted with our motives, we cannot hope to succeed. This it is that leads us to mourn for sin as sin, and not merely for the inconvenience to which it exposes us. This it is which renders salvation through the atonement of Christ so acceptable. He that loves only himself, provided he might be saved, would care little or nothing for the honour of the divine character: but he that loves God, will be concerned for his glory. Heaven itself would be no enjoyment to him, if his admission must be at the expense of righteousness.

"God is to be loved," says Dr. Gill, "for himself; because of his own nature, and the perfections of it, which render him amiable and lovely, and worthy of our strongest love and affection; as these are displayed in the works of creation and providence, and especially of grace, redemption, and salvation; to all which the Psalmist has respect, when he says, *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy* NAME, nature, and per-

fections, *in all the earth!* (Psalm viii. 1.) As God is great in himself, and greatly to be praised; great, and greatly to be feared; so, great, and greatly to be loved, for what he is in himself. And this is the purest and most perfect love of a creature towards God: for, if we love him only for his goodness towards us, it is loving ourselves rather than him, at least, a loving him for ourselves, and so a loving ourselves more than him."* But this "most pure and perfect love" is manifestly the duty of all mankind, however far they are from a compliance with it. *Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory* DUE *unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.—Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.—King's of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the Lord:* FOR HIS NAME ALONE IS EXCELLENT: *his glory is above the earth, and heaven. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee!*†

That *love to Christ* is a spiritual exercise, may, I suppose, be taken for granted. The *grace*, or favour of God, is *with all* who possess it *in sincerity*.‡ But love to Christ is the duty of every one to whom the gospel is preached. On no other principles could the Apostle have written as he did: *If any one love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, Maran-atha!* It is worthy of notice, that this awful sentence is not denounced against sinners, as positively *hating* Christ, but as *not loving* him; plainly implying his *worthiness* of a place in our best affections, and that, were it possible for us to be indifferent towards him, even that indifference would deserve the heavy curse of the Almighty at the last judgment. Paul appears to have felt as a soldier would feel towards the best of princes, or commanders. If, after David's return from his engagement with Goliath, when the women of Israel were praising him in their songs, any of the sons of Belial had spoken of him in the language of detraction, it would have been

* *Body of Divinity*, Vol. III. Chap. IX.

† 1 Chron. xvi. 28, 29. Psa. cxlviii. 11—13. c. 1. lxvii. 3.

‡ Ephes. vi 24.

natural, for one of a patriotic spirit, deeply impressed with an idea of the hero's worth, and of the service he had rendered to his country, thus to have expressed himself: "If any man love not the son of Jesse, let him be banished from among the tribes of Israel." Of this kind were the feelings of the Apostle. He had served under his Lord and Saviour for many years: and now, sensible in a high degree of the glory of his character, he scruples not to pronounce that man who loves him not, *accursed!*

The fear of God is a spiritual exercise; for it has the promise of spiritual blessings.* But it is also a duty required of men, and that without the distinction of regenerate or unregenerate. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would* FEAR *me, and keep all my commandments always!*—FEAR *before him, all the earth.*—*Let all that be round about him, bring presents unto him* THAT OUGHT TO BE FEARED.—*Who would not* FEAR *thee, O King of nations?*—FEAR *thou God.*—FEAR *God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*—*Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and* FEAR *the Lord your God:*—*and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to* FEAR *the Lord your God.*—*Serve the Lord with* FEAR, *and rejoice with trembling.*—*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying,*—FEAR GOD, *and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth!*—*Who shall not* FEAR *thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.*† To say of men, *they have no fear of God before their eyes,*‡ is to represent them as under the dominion of depravity.

It may be objected, that the Scriptures distinguish between that holy fear of offending God which is peculiar to his children, and a mere dread of the misery threatened against sin,

* Psalm xxxiv. 7. 9. ciii. 11. 13. 17.

† Deut. v. 29. 1 Chron. xvi. 30. Psalm lxxvi. 11. Jer. x. 7. Eccles. v. 7. xii. 13. Deut. xxxi. 12, 13. Psalm ii. 11. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. xv. 4.

‡ Rom. iii. 18.

which is found in the wicked. True: there is a fear of God which is not spiritual: such was that of the slothful servant; and the same is found in hypocrites and devils;* this, however, is no part of duty, but rather of punishment. God does not require this, either of saints or sinners. That which he requires, is of a *holy* nature, such as is expressed in the passages before quoted; which is spiritual, and has the promise of spiritual blessings. It resembles that of a dutiful child to his father, and is therefore properly called *filial;* and though none are possessed of it but the children of God, yet that is because none else are possessed of a right spirit.

Repentance, or a *godly sorrow for sin*, is a spiritual exercise: for it abounds with promises of spiritual blessings. But repentance is a duty required of every sinner. *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.—Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*† The *hardness of heart* which our Lord found in the Jews, and which is the opposite of repentance, *grieved* him; which it would not, had it not been their sin.‡ Finally, A *hard and impenitent heart treasures up wrath against the day of wrath:* but impenitence could be no sin, if penitence were not a duty.§

Repentance, it is allowed, like all other spiritual exercises, has its counterfeit, and which is not spiritual: but neither is it that which God requires at the hands of either saints or sinners. What is called natural, and sometimes legal repentance, is merely a sorrow on account of *consequences*. Such was the repentance of Saul and Judas.

In order to evade the argument arising from the addresses of John the Baptist, of Christ and his apostles, who called upon the Jewish people *to repent and believe the gospel*, it has been alleged, that it was only an outward repentance and acknowledgment of the truth to which they were exhorted, and

* Luke xix. 21. James. ii. 19.
† Mat. iii. 2. Acts iii. 19. James iv 8—10.
‡ Mark iii. 5. § Rom. ii. 5.

not that which is spiritual, or which has the promise of spiritual blessings. But it will be difficult, if not impossible, to prove that such repentance and faith are any where required of sinners, or that it is consistent with the divine perfections to require them. An outward repentance and reformation of manners, as distinguished from that which consists in godly sorrow, is only *repentance in appearance.* Whatever sorrow there is in it, it is not on account of sin, but its consequences; and to suppose that Christ, or his servants, required this would be doing them infinite dishonour. It is no other than supposing them to have betrayed the authority of God over the human heart; to have sanctioned hypocrisy; and to have given counsels to sinners, which, if taken, would leave them still exposed to everlasting destruction.

The case of the Ninevites has been alleged as furnishing an example of that repentance which is the duty of men in general, and which Christ and his apostles required of the Jews. I do not know that the repentance of the Ninevites was genuine, or connected with spiritual blessings: neither do my opponents know that it was not. Probably, the repentance of some of them was genuine, while that of the greater part might be only put on in conformity to the orders of government; or, at most, merely as the effect of terrour. But, whatever it was, even though none of it were genuine, the object *professed* was *godly sorrow for sin;* and if God treated them upon the supposition of their being sincere, and it repented him of the evil which he had threatened, it is no more than he did to Pharaoh, Abijah, Ahab, and others.* It is a very unjust conclusion to draw from his conduct, that their repentance was such as he approved, and the whole which he required at their hands. So far from it, there might be nothing in any of them which could approve itself to him as the searcher of hearts: and though, for wise reasons, he might think it proper, in those instances, to overlook their hypocrisy, and to *treat* them on the supposition of their repentance being what they professed it to be; yet he might still reserve to himself the power of judging them at the last day according to their works.

* Exod. viii. 8, 9. 2 Chron. xiii. with 1 Kings xv. 1 Kings xxi. 27. 29.

The object of John the Baptist was not to effect a mere outward reformation of manners, but to *turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.** Such was the effect actually produced by his ministry, and by that of Christ and the apostles. The repentance which they called upon sinners to exercise, was such as entitled those who possessed it to Christian *baptism*, and which had the promise of *the remission of sins*.†

It is plainly intimated, by the apostle Paul, that all repentance, except that which worketh in a way of godly sorrow, and which he calls *repentance unto salvation*, NEEDS TO BE REPENTED OF. It is the mere *sorrow of the world, which worketh death*.‡ But that which requires to be repented of, cannot be commanded of God, or constitute any part of a sinner's duty. The duty of every transgressor is to be *sorry at heart* for having sinned.

Humility, or *lowliness of mind*, is a spiritual disposition, and has the promise of spiritual blessings. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.—He giveth grace unto the humble.—Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*:§ yet this disposition is required as the duty of all. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up*.‖ Humility does not consist in thinking less, or more meanly, of ourselves than is true. The difference between one that is lowly, and one that is proud, lies in this: the one thinks justly of himself, and the other unjustly. The most humble Christian only thinks of himself *soberly, as he ought to think*.¶ All the instances of humility recorded of the godly, in the scriptures, are but so many examples of a *right spirit*, a spirit brought down to their situation. *Carry back the ark of God into the city*, says David: *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring*

* Luke i. 17. † Mark i. 4. Acts ii. 38. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 10.
§ Psalm cxxxviii. 6. James iv. 6. Matt. v. 3. ‖ James iv. 8—10.
¶ Rom. xii. 3.

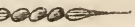
me again, and show me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. This was very different from the spirit of his predecessor, when he was given to expect the loss of the kingdom; yet it was no more than was the duty of Saul, as well as of David; and all his proud and rebellious opposition served only to increase his guilt and misery. The spirit of the publican was no more than was becoming a sinner, and would have been becoming the pharisee himself.

Finally: If whatever has the promise of spiritual blessings be a spiritual exercise, every thing that is *right*, or which *accords with the divine precept*, must be so: for the scriptures uniformly promise eternal life to every such exercise. They that *do good* shall come forth to the resurrection of life. He that *doeth righteousness* is *righteous*. The giving of *a cup of cold water* to a disciple of Christ, because he belongs to him, will be followed with a disciple's reward. Nay, a *blessing* is pronounced upon those who are *not offended* in him. But, though these things are spiritual, and are characteristic of the godly; yet, who will say they are not binding on the ungodly? Are they excused from *good*, from *doing right*, from bestowing *a cup of water* on a disciple of Jesus because he belongs to him? At least, are they allowed to be *offended* in him?

If God's law be spiritual, and remain in full force as a standard of obligation; if men, while unconverted, have no real conformity to it; if regeneration be the writing of it upon the heart, or the renewal of the mind to a right spirit; all these things are clear and consistent. This is for the same thing, in different respects, to be "man's duty and God's gift:" a position which Dr. Owen has fully established;* and somewhere remarks, that he who is ignorant of it has yet to learn one of the first principles of religion. In short, this is rendering the work of the Spirit what the scriptures denominate it—LEADING US BY THE WAY THAT WE SHOULD GO.† But, if that which is bestowed by the Holy Spirit be something different in its nature from that which is required in the di-

* *Display of Arminianism*, Chap. X. † Isa. xlviii. 17.

vine precepts, I see not what is to be made of the scriptures, nor how it is, that *righteousness*, *goodness*, or any thing else which is required of men, should be accompanied, as it is, with the promise of eternal life.



PART III.

CONTAINING ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

THE principal objections that are made to the foregoing statement of things, are taken from—The nature of original holiness, as it existed in our first parents—The divine decrees—Particular redemption—The covenant of works—The inability of man—The operations of the Spirit—and the necessity of a divine principle in order to believing.

It may be worthy of some notice, at least from those who are perpetually reproaching the statement here defended, as leading to Arminianism, that the greater part of these objections are of *Arminian* original. They are the same, for substance, as have been alleged by the leading writers of that scheme, in their controversies with the Calvinists; and from the writings of the latter, it were easy to select answers to them. This, in effect, is acknowledged by Mr. Brine, who, however, considers these answers as insufficient, and, therefore, prefers others before them.*

It also deserves to be considered, whether objections drawn from such subjects as the above, in which we may presently get beyond our depth, ought to weigh against that body of evidence which has been adduced from the plain declarations and precepts of the holy scriptures? What if, by reason of darkness, we could not ascertain the precise nature of the principle of our first parents? It is certain we know but little of original purity. Our disordered souls are incapable of forming just ideas of so glorious a state. To attempt, therefore,

* *Arminian Principles of a Late Writer Refuted*, p. 6.

to settle the boundaries of even *their* duty, by an abstract inquiry into the nature of their powers and principles, would be improper; and still more so to make it the medium by which to judge of *our own*. There are but two ways by which we can judge on such a subject: The one is from the *character of the Creator*, and the other from *scripture testimony*. From the former, we may infer the *perfect purity* of the creature, as coming out of the hands of God; but nothing can be concluded of his inability to believe in Christ, had he been in circumstances which required it. As to the latter, the only passage that I recollect to have seen produced for the purpose, is, 1 Cor. xv. 47. *The first man was of the earth, earthy;* which Mr. Johnson, of Liverpool, alleged, to prove the *earthiness* of Adam's mind, or principles: but Mr. Brine sufficiently refutes this; proving that this divine proposition respects the *body*, and not the *principles*, of our first father;* and thus Dr. Gill expounds it.

With regard to the doctrine of *divine decrees*, &c. it is a fact, that the great body of the divines who have believed those doctrines, have also believed the other. Neither Augustine, nor Calvin, who each, in his day, defended predestination, and the other doctrines connected with it, ever appear to have thought of denying it to be the duty of every sinner who has heard the gospel to repent, and believe in Jesus Christ. Neither did the other Reformers, nor the Puritans of the sixteenth century, nor the divines at the synod of Dort, (who opposed Arminius,) nor any of the Nonconformists of the seventeenth century, so far as I have any acquaintance with their writings, ever so much as hesitate upon this subject. The writings of Calvin himself, would now be deemed Arminian by a great number of our opponents. I allow, that the principles here defended may be inconsistent with the doctrines of grace, notwithstanding the leading advocates of those doctrines have admitted them; and am far from wishing any person to build his faith on the authority of great men: but their admission of them ought to suffice for the silencing of that kind of opposition against them, which consists in calling names.

* *Johnson's Mistakes Noted and Rectified*, pp. 18—23.

Were a difficulty allowed to exist, as to the reconciling of these subjects, it would not warrant a rejection of either of them. If I find two doctrines affirmed, or implied in the scriptures, which, to my feeble understanding, may seem to clash, I ought not to embrace the one, and to reject the other, because of their supposed inconsistency: for, on the same ground, another person might embrace that which I reject, and reject that which I embrace, and have equal *scriptural authority* for his faith, as I have for mine. Yet in this manner many have acted on both sides; some, taking the general precepts and invitations of scripture for their standard, have rejected the doctrine of discriminating grace; others, taking the declarations of salvation, as being a fruit of electing love, for their standard, deny that sinners, without distinction, are called upon to believe for the salvation of their souls. Hence it is, that we hear of *Calvinistic* and *Arminian texts;* as though these leaders had agreed to divide the scriptures between them. The truth is, there are but two ways for us to take: one is, to reject them *both*, and the Bible with them, on account of its inconsistencies; the other is, to embrace them both, concluding that, as they are both revealed in the scriptures, they are both true, and both consistent, and that it is owing to the darkness of our understandings that they do not appear so to us. Those excellent lines of Dr. Watts, in his Hymn on Election, one should think, must approve themselves to every pious heart:

> But, O my soul, if truth so bright
> Should dazzle and confound thy sight,
> Yet still his written will obey,
> And wait the great decisive day.

Had we more of that about which we contend, it would teach us more to suspect our own understandings, and to submit to the wisdom of God. Abraham, that pattern of faith, might have made objections to the command of offering up his son, on the ground of its inconsistency with the promise, and might have set himself to find some other meaning for the terms: but he *believed God*, and left it to him to reconcile his promise and his precepts. It was not for him to dispute, but to obey.

These general remarks, however, are not introduced for the purpose of avoiding a particular attention to the several objections, but rather as preparatory to it.

ON THE PRINCIPLE OF HOLINESS POSSESSED BY MAN IN INNOCENCE.

The objection drawn from this subject has been stated in the following words: "The holy principle connatural to Adam, and concreated with him, was not suited to live unto God through a mediator; that kind of life was above the extent of his powers, though perfect: and, therefore, as he, in a state of integrity, had not a capacity of living unto God, agreeably to the nature of the new covenant; it is apprehended that his posterity, while under the *first* covenant, are not commanded to live unto God in that sort, or, in other words, to live by faith on God through a mediator."*

The whole weight of these important conclusions rests upon the first two sentences, and which are mere unfounded assertions. For the truth of them no *proof* whatever is offered. What evidence is there that "the principle of holiness concreated with Adam, was not suited to live unto God through a mediator?" That his circumstances were such as not to need a mediator, is true; but this involves no such consequence. A subject, while he preserves his loyalty, needs no mediator in approaching the throne: if he have offended, it is otherwise; but a change of circumstances would not require a change of principles. On the contrary, the same principle of loyal affection that would induce him, while innocent, to approach the throne with modest confidence, would induce him, after having offended, to approach it with penitence, or, which is the same thing, to be sorry at heart for what he had done: and, if a mediator were at hand, with whose interposition the sovereign had declared himself well pleased, it would, at the same time, lead him to implore forgiveness in his name.

Had Cain lived before the fall, God would not have been offended at his bringing an offering without a sacrifice; but after that event, and the promise of the woman's seed, together with the institution of sacrifices, such a conduct was highly

* Mr. Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity*, pp. 50, 51.

offensive. It was equally disregarding the threatening and the promise: treating the first as if nothing was meant by it; and the last as a matter of no account. It was practically saying, 'God is not in earnest. There is no great evil in sin; nor any necessity for an atonement. If I come with my offering, I shall doubtless be accepted, and my Creator will think himself honoured.' Such is still the language of a self-righteous heart. But is it thus that Adam's posterity, while "under the first covenant," (or, rather, while vainly hoping for the promise of the first covenant, after having broken its conditions,) are required to approach an offended God? If the principle of Adam in innocence was not suited to live to God through a mediator, and this be the standard of duty to his carnal descendants, it must, of course, be their duty either not to worship God at all, or to worship him as Cain did, without any respect to an atoning sacrifice. On the contrary, is there not reason to conclude that the case of Cain and Abel was designed to teach mankind, from the very outset of the world, God's determination to have no fellowship with sinners, but through a mediator; and that all attempts to approach him in any other way would be vain and presumptuous?

It is true, that man in innocence was unable to repent of sin, or to believe in the Saviour: for he had no sin to repent of, nor was any Saviour revealed, or needed. But he was equally unable to repent with such a *natural* sorrow for sin as is allowed to be the duty of his posterity, or to believe the history of the gospel in the way which is also allowed to be binding on all who hear it. To this it might be added, he was unable to perform the duty of a father; for he had no children to educate: nor could he pity or relieve the miserable; for there were no miserable objects to be pitied or relieved. Yet we do not conclude, from hence, that his descendants are excused from these duties.

"That Adam, in a state of innocence," says Dr. Gill, "had the power of believing in Christ, and did believe in him as the second person of the Trinity, as the Son of God, cannot well be denied; since, with the other two persons, he was his Creator and Preserver. AND HIS NOT BELIEVING IN HIM AS THE MEDIATOR, SAVIOUR, AND REDEEMER, DID NOT ARISE

FROM ANY DEFECT OF POWER IN HIM, BUT FROM THE STATE, CONDITION, AND SITUATION IN WHICH HE WAS, AND FROM THE NATURE OF THE REVELATION MADE UNTO HIM; for, no doubt, Adam had a power to believe every word of God, or any revelation that was, or might be made unto him."*

The reader will perceive the origin of this objection, if he look into Dr. Owen's *Display of Arminianism*, Chap. VIII. He there complains of the "attempt of Arminians to draw down our first parents, even from the instant of their forming, into the same condition wherein we are engaged by reason of corrupt nature." He mentions several of their maxims and sentiments, and, among others, two of their sayings: the one, of the *Remonstrants*, in their Apology; and the other, of the six *Arminian* Collocutors at the Hague. "The will of man," say the former, "had never any spiritual endowments." "In the spiritual death of sin," say the latter, there are no spiritual gifts properly wanting in will, because they were never there." "The sum is," adds the Doctor, ironically, "Man was created with a nature, not only weak and imperfect, unable by its native strength and endowments to attain that supernatural end for which he was made, and which he was commanded to seek; but depraved also with a love and desire of things repugnant to the will of God, by reason of an inbred inclination to sinning! It doth not properly belong to this place to show how they extenuate those gifts also with which they cannot deny but that he was endued, and also deny those which he had; as *a power to believe in Christ*, or to assent unto any truth that God should reveal unto him: and yet they grant this privilege unto every one of his posterity, in that depraved condition of nature whereinto by sin he cast himself and us. We have all now, *they tell us*, a power of believing in Christ; that is, Adam, by his fall, obtained a supernatural endowment, far more excellent than any he had before!"

That there are differences between the principle of holiness in innocent Adam, and that which is wrought in believers, may be admitted. The production of the former was merely an expression of the Creator's *purity*; the latter of his

* *Cause of God and Truth*, Part III. Chap. III.

grace: that was capable of being lost; this is secured by promise: the one was exercised in contemplating and adoring God as the Creator and Preserver; the other, not only in these characters, but as the God of salvation. The same may be allowed concerning the *life* promised to Adam, in case of obedience, and that which is enjoyed through a Mediator. The one will be greater than the other; for Christ came not only that we might have life, but that we might have it *more abundantly:* but these differences are merely circumstantial, and, therefore, do not affect the argument. The joy of *angels* is greatly increased by man's redemption; but it does not follow, that their principles are different from what they were prior to that event. A life of joy in heaven is far more glorious than a life of communion with God on earth; yet the principles of saints on earth, and saints in heaven, are not, therefore, of a different *nature.*

That the principle of holiness in Adam, and that which is wrought in believers, are *essentially* the same, I conclude, from the following reasons.

First: *They are both formed after the same likeness,* THE IMAGE OF GOD. *God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him.*—PUT YE *on the new man, which,* AFTER GOD, *is created in righteousness and true holiness.** If God be immutable in his nature, that which is created after him must be the same, for substance, at all times, and in all circumstances. There cannot be two specifically different images of the same original.

Secondly: *They are both a conformity to the same standard,* THE MORAL LAW. That the spirit and conduct of man in innocence was neither more nor less than a perfect conformity to this law, I suppose, will be allowed; and the same may be said of the spirit and conduct of Jesus Christ, *so far as he was our exemplar,* or the model after which we are formed. God's law was within his heart. It was *his meat and drink to do his will.* He went to *the end of the law for righteousness;* but it does not appear that he went beyond it. The superiority of his obedience to that of all others lay, not in his doing more than the law required, but in the dignity of his per-

* Gen. i. 27. Ephes. iv. 24.

son, which stamped infinite value on every thing he did. But, if such was the spirit and conduct of Christ, to whose image we are predestinated to be conformed, it must, of necessity, be ours. This also perfectly agrees with those scriptural representations which describe the work of the Spirit as *writing God's law in the heart*;* and with those which represent the ultimate state of holiness to which we shall arrive in heaven, as no more than a conformity to this law and this model: *The spirits of just men* MADE PERFECT—*We shall be* LIKE HIM.

Thirdly: *The terms used to describe the one imply that it is of the same nature as the other.* Conversion is expressed by a *return* to God;† which denotes a recovery to a right state of mind, after a departure from him. Regeneration is called a *washing*, which expresses the restoring of the soul to purity, from which it had degenerated; and, hence, the same divine operation is, in the same passage, called the *renewing* of the Holy Spirit.

But, "this renovation," it has been said, "is spoken of the mind, and not of a principle in the mind."‡ The renewal of the mind must either be natural or moral. If the former, it would seem as if we had divested ourselves of the use of our natural faculties, and that regeneration consists in restoring them. If the latter, by the mind must be meant the *disposition* of the mind, or, as the scripture speaks, *the* SPIRIT *of our minds*.§ But this amounts to the same thing as a principle in our minds. There is no difference between a mind being restored to a right state and condition, and a right state and condition being restored to the mind.

Fourthly: *Supreme love to God, which is acknowledged to be the principle of man in innocence, would necessarily lead a fallen creature to embrace the gospel way of salvation.* This is clearly intimated in our Lord's reasonings with the Jews: *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.*|| This reasoning, on the contrary hypothesis, was invalid; for, if re-

* Psa. xl. 8. John iv. 34. Rom. x. 4. Jer. xxxi. 33.
† Isa. lv. 7. ‡ *Motives to Love and Unity*, p. 22
§ Ephes. iv. 23. || John v. 42, 43.

ceiving the Messiah was that to which a principle of supreme love to God was unequal, a non-reception of him would afford no proof of its absence. They might have had the love of God in them, and yet not have received him.

The love to God which was possessed by Adam in innocence was equal to that of the holy angels. His being of the *earth*, *earthy*, as to his body, no more proves his inferiority to them, as to the principles of his mind, than it proves the inferiority of Christ in this respect, who, before his resurrection, was possessed of a natural, and not a spiritual body. But it cannot be denied, that the angels are capable of understanding, believing, and approving of the gospel way of salvation. It is, above all others, their chosen theme: *which things the angels desire to look into.** It is true, they do not embrace the Messiah as *their Saviour;* because they do not stand in need of salvation: but give a free invitation and their principles to a being that wants a Saviour, and he would not scruple a moment about accepting it. It is not possible for a creature to love God, without loving the greatest friend of God, and embracing a gospel that, more than any thing, tends to exalt his character: neither is it possible to love mankind with a holy and affectionate regard towards their best interests, without loving the friend of sinners, and approving of a doctrine that breathes *good will to men.*

CONCERNING THE DECREES OF GOD.

A general invitation to sinners, to return to God, and be saved through Christ, it has been thought, must be inconsistent with an election of some and a consequent rejection of others. Such has been the mode of objecting used by the adversaries to the doctrines of discriminating grace;† and such is the mode of late adopted by our opponents.

In general, I would observe, if this mode of reasoning prove any thing, it will prove too much: it will prove that it is not the duty of some men to attend the means of grace, or in any way to seek after the salvation of their souls, or to be in the least degree concerned about it; for it may be pleaded, that God cannot have made it their duty, or have invited them

* 1 Peter i. 12.

† See Owen's *Death of Death*, Book IV. Chap. I.

to attend the means of salvation, seeing he is determined not to bestow salvation upon them. And thus we must not only be driven to explain the general invitation to many who never came to the gospel-supper, of a mere invitation to attend the means of grace, but must absolutely give it up, and the Bible with it, on account of its inconsistency.

Farther: This mode of reasoning would prove that the use of means in order to obtain a temporal subsistence, and to preserve life, is altogether vain and inconsistent. If we believe that the future states of men are determined by God, we must also believe the same of their present states. The scriptures teach the one, no less than the other. *God hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation.** Our *cuft* is measured, and our *lot* assigned us.† There is also *an appointed time for man upon earth:* his days are as *the days of an hireling. His days are determined, the number of his months are with God:* he has *appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*‡ Yet those who reason as above, with regard to things of another life, are as attentive to the affairs of this life as other people. They are no less concerned than their neighbours, for their present accommodation; nor less employed in devising means for the lengthening out of their lives, and of their tranquillity. But, if the purpose of God may consist with the agency of man in present concerns, it may in those which are future, whether we can perceive the link that unites them, or not: and if our duty, in the one case, be the same as if no such purpose existed, it is so in the other. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.*

It was the duty of Pharaoh to have followed the counsel of Moses, and to have let the people go; and his sin to pursue them into the sea: yet it was the purpose of God by this means to destroy him.§ *Moses sent messengers to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through thy land;* and it was, doubtless, the duty of Sihon to have

* Acts xvii. 26.
† Psalm xvi. 5.
‡ Job vii. 1. xiv. 5.
§ Exod. vii. 1—4.

complied with the request: yet it appears, by the issue, that the Lord had determined to give his country to Israel for a possession, and, therefore, gave him up to hardness of heart, by which it was accomplished.*

If the days of man are determined, and his bounds appointed that he cannot pass them, it must have been determined, that that generation of the Israelites which went out of Egypt should die in the wilderness: yet it was their duty to have believed God, and to have gone up to possess the land; and their sin to disbelieve him, and turn back in their hearts to Egypt. And it deserves particular notice, that this their sin is held up, both by David and Paul, as an example for others to shun, and that in spiritual concerns.† It was the determination of God, that Ahab should fall in his expedition against Ramoth-gilead, as was plainly intimated to him by Micaiah: yet it was his duty to have hearkened to the counsel that was given him, and to have desisted from his purpose.‡ The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was determined of God, and frequently foretold by the prophets: yet the inhabitants were as frequently counselled to return from their evil ways, that they might avoid it. Jeremiah particularly entreated Zedekiah to follow his counsel, that he might save the city and himself from ruin.§

However such things may grate upon the minds of some, yet there are cases in which we ourselves are in the habit of using similar language, and that without any idea of attributing to God any thing inconsistent with the greatest perfection of moral character. If a wicked man be set on mischievous pursuits, and all the advices and warnings of his friends be lost upon him, we do not scruple to say, 'It seems as if God had determined to destroy him, and, therefore, has given him up to infatuation.' In the use of such language, we have no idea of the determination of God being unjust, or capricious. On the contrary, we suppose he may have *wise* and *just* reasons for doing as he does; and, as such, notwithstanding our compassion towards the party, we acquiesce in it. Whenever we speak of God as having determined to destroy

* Deut. ii. 26—30.
† 1 Cor. x. 6—12.
‡ 1 Kings xxii. 15—22.
§ Jer. xxxviii. 20.

a person, or a people, we feel the subject too profound for our comprehension; and well indeed we may. Even an inspired Apostle, when discoursing of God's rejection of the Jewish nation, though he glances at the merciful aspect which this awful event wore towards the Gentiles, and traces some great and wise designs that should be answered by it; yet feels himself lost in his subject. Standing as on the brink of an unfathomable abyss, he exclaims, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!** He believed the doctrine of divine decrees, or, that God *worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:* but he had no idea of making these things any part of the rule of duty; either so as to excuse his countrymen from the sin of unbelief, or himself from using every possible mean that might accomplish their salvation. On the one hand, he quoted the words of David as applicable to them; *Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them.* On the other, he declares, *I speak to you, Gentiles—if by* ANY MEANS *I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*†

There were those in that day, as well as in this, who objected, If things be as God hath purposed, *Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will?* This was no other than suggesting, that the doctrine of decrees must needs operate to the setting aside of the *fault* of sinners; and this is the substance of what has been alleged from that day to this. Some, because they cannot conceive of the doctrine but as drawing after it the consequence assigned to it by this *reflyer against God*, reject it: others appear to have no objection to the consequence itself, stamped as it is with infamy by the manner in which the Apostle repelled it, and, therefore, admit the doctrine as connected with it! But so did not Paul. He held fast the doctrine of decrees, and held it as comporting with the *fault* of sinners. After all that he had written upon God's electing some, and rejecting others, he, in the same chapter, assigns the failure of those that failed to their

* Rom. xi. 33. † Rom. xi. 9. x. 1. xi. 13, 14.

*not seeking justification by faith in Christ; but as it were by the works of the law, stumbling at that stumbling-stone.**

"God's word," says Mr. Brine, "and not his secret purpose, is the rule of our conduct."† "We must exactly distinguish," says Dr. Owen, "between man's duty and God's purpose; there being no connexion between them. The purpose and decree of God is not the rule of our duty; neither is the performance of our duty, in doing what we are commanded, any declaration of what is God's purpose to do, or his decree that it should be done. Especially is this to be seen and considered in the duty of the ministers of the gospel; in the dispensing of the word, in exhortations, invitations, precepts, and threatenings, committed unto them: all which are perpetual declaratives of our duty, and do manifest the approbation of the thing exhorted and invited to, with the truth of the connexion between one thing and another; but not of the counsel or purpose of God, in respect of individual persons, in the ministry of the word. A minister is not to make inquiry after, nor to trouble himself about, those secrets of the eternal mind of God, viz. whom he purposeth to save, and whom he hath sent Christ to die for in particular: it is enough for them to search his revealed will, and thence take their *directions*, from whence they have their *commissions*. Wherefore, there is no conclusion from the universal precepts of the word, concerning the things, unto God's purpose in himself concerning persons; they command and invite all to *repent* and *believe*; but they know not in particular on whom God will bestow repentance unto salvation, nor in whom he will effect the work of faith with power."‡

On Particular Redemption.

Objections to the foregoing principles, from the doctrine of election, are generally united with those from particular redemption; and, indeed, they are so connected, that the validity of the one stands or falls with that of the other.

To ascertain the force of the objection, it is proper to inquire, Wherein the peculiarity of redemption consists? If the atonement of Christ were considered as the literal payment

* Rom. ix. 32. † *Certain Efficacy, &c.* p. 151.
‡ *Death of Death*, Book IV. Chap. I.

of a debt; if the measure of his sufferings were according to the number of those for whom he died, and to the degree of their guilt, in such a manner as that, if more had been saved, or if those who are saved had been more guilty, his sorrows must have been proportionably increased; it might, for aught I know, be inconsistent with indefinite invitations. But it would be equally inconsistent with the free *forgiveness* of sin, and with sinners being directed to apply for mercy as *supplicants*, rather than as claimants. I conclude, therefore, that an hypothesis which in so many important points is manifestly inconsistent with the scriptures, cannot be true.

On the other hand, if the atonement of Christ proceed not on the principle of commercial, but of moral justice, or justice as it relates to *crime*; if its grand object were to express the divine displeasure against sin,* and so to render the exercise of mercy, in all the ways wherein sovereign wisdom should determine to apply it, consistent with righteousness;† if it be in itself equal to the salvation of the whole world, were the whole world to embrace it; and if the peculiarity which attends it, consist not in its insufficiency to save more than are saved, but in the sovereignty of its application, no such inconsistency can justly be ascribed to it.

If the atonement of Christ excluded a part of mankind *in the same sense* as it excludes fallen angels, why is the gospel addressed to the one, any more than to the other? The message of wisdom is addressed to *men*, and not to devils. The former are invited to the gospel-supper, but the latter are not. These facts afford proof, that Christ, by his death, opened a door of hope to sinners of the human race *as sinners; affording a ground for their being invited, without distinction, to believe and be saved.*

But, as God might send his Son into the world to save men, rather than angels; so he may *apply* his sacrifice to the salvation of some men, and not of others. It is a fact, that a great part of the world have never heard the gospel; that the greater part of those who have heard it disregard it; and that those who believe are taught to ascribe not only their

* Rom. viii. 3. † Rom. iii. 25.

salvation, but faith itself, through which it is obtained, to the *free gift of God*. And, as the application of redemption is solely directed by sovereign wisdom; so, like every other event, it is the result of *previous design*. That which is actually done was *intended* to be done. Hence the salvation of those that are saved is described as the *end* which the Saviour had in view: *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*.* Herein, it is apprehended, consists the peculiarity of redemption.

There is no contradiction between this peculiarity of *design* in the death of Christ, and a universal obligation on those who hear the gospel to believe in him, or a universal invitation being addressed to them. If God, through the death of his Son, have promised salvation to all who comply with the gospel; and if there be no *natural* impossibility as to a compliance, nor any obstruction but that which arises from aversion of heart; exhortations and invitations to believe and be saved are consistent: and our duty, as preachers of the gospel, is to administer them, without any more regard to particular redemption than to election; both being secret things, which belong to the Lord our God, and which, however they be a rule to him, are none to us. If that which sinners are called upon to believe respected the particular design of Christ to save them, it would then be inconsistent: but they are neither exhorted nor invited to believe any thing but what is revealed, and what will prove true, whether they believe it, or not. He that believeth in Jesus Christ, must believe in him as he is revealed in the gospel: and that is as the Saviour of *sinners*. It is only *as a sinner*, exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, that he must approach him. If he think of coming to him as a favourite of heaven, or as possessed of any good qualities which may recommend him before other sinners, he deceives his soul: such notions are the bar to believing. "He that will know his own particular redemption, before he will believe," says a well-known writer, "begins at the wrong end of his work, and is very unlikely to come that way to the knowledge of it.—Any man that owns himself *a sinner*, hath

* Titus ii. 14.

as fair a ground for his faith, as any one in the world that hath not yet believed; nor may any person, on any account, exclude himself from redemption, unless by his obstinate and resolved continuance in unbelief, he hath marked out himself."*

"The preachers of the gospel, in their particular congregations," says another, "being utterly unacquainted with the purpose and secret counsel of God, being also forbidden to pry or search into it, (Deut. xxix. 29.) may justifiably call upon every man to believe, with assurance of salvation to every one in particular, upon his so doing; knowing, and being fully persuaded of this, that there is enough in the death of Christ to save every one that shall do so: leaving the purpose and counsel of God, on whom he will bestow faith, and for whom in particular Christ died, (even as they are commanded,) to himself."—"When God calleth upon men to believe, he doth not, in the first place, call upon them to believe that Christ died for them; but that *there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*, but only of *Jesus Christ*, through whom salvation is preached."†

OF SINNERS BEING UNDER THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

Much has been said on this subject, in relation to the present controversy.‡ Yet I feel at a loss in forming a judgment wherein the force of the objection lies, as it is no where, that I recollect, formed into a regular argument. If I understand Mr. Brine, he supposes, First, That all duty is required by the law, either as a rule of life, or as a covenant. Secondly: That all unconverted sinners being under the law as a covenant, whatever the revealed will of God now requires of them, it is to be considered as the requirement of that covenant. Thirdly: That the terms of the covenant of works being *Do, and live:* it cannot, for this reason, be *Believe, and be saved.*

But, allowing the distinction between the law as a rule of life, and as a covenant, to be just; before any conclusion can be drawn from it, it requires to be ascertained, in what sense

* Elisha Coles on *God's Sovereignty*, on Redemption.

† Dr. Owen's *Death of Death*, Book IV. Chap. I.

‡ Mr. Brine's *Motives to Love and Unity*, pp. 37—42.

unbelievers are under a covenant of works; and whether, in some respects, it be not their sin to continue so? That they are *under the curse*, for having broken it, is true; and that they are still labouring to substitute something in the place of perfect obedience, by which they may regain the divine favour, is true also: but *this latter ought not to be.** A self-righteous attachment to a covenant of works, or, as the scripture expresses it, a being *of the works of the law*, is no other than the working of unbelief, and rebellion against the truth. Strictly speaking, men are not now under the covenant of works, but under the *curse* for having broken it. God is not in covenant with them, nor they with him. The law, as a covenant, was recorded, and a new and enlarged edition of it given to Israel at mount Sinai; not, however, for the purpose of *giving life* to those who had broken it; but, rather, as a preparative to a better covenant. Its *precepts* still stand as the immutable will of God towards his creatures; its *promises*, as memorials of what might have been expected from his goodness, in case of obedience; and its *curses*, as a flaming sword that guards the tree of life. It is stationed in the oracles of God as a faithful watchman, to repel the vain hopes of the self-righteous, and convince them of the necessity of a Saviour.† Hence, it was given to Israel by the hand of Moses, *as a mediator*. See Gal. iii. 19—21.

But, if unbelievers be no otherwise under the covenant of works than as they are exposed to its curse, it is improper to say, that whatever is required of them in the scriptures is required by that covenant, and as a term of life. God requires nothing of fallen creatures as a *term of life*. He requires them to love him with all their hearts, the same as if they had never apostatized; but not with a view to regain his lost favour: for, were they, henceforward, perfectly to comply with the divine precepts, unless they could atone for past offences, (which is impossible,) they could have no ground to expect the bestowment of everlasting life. It is enough for

* The sinner's hope, that he can be justified by the law he has broken, is an *illegal* hope; and a just view of the extent, strictness, spirituality, and equity of the Law, would cut it up by the roots. R.

† Rom. vii. 10. Matt. xix. 17.

us, that the revealed will of God to sinners says, *Believe;* while the gospel graciously adds the promise of *salvation.*

ON THE INABILITY OF SINNERS TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, AND DO THINGS SPIRITUALLY GOOD.

This objection is seldom made in form, unless it be by persons who deny it to be the duty of a sinner to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. Intimations are often given, however, that it is absurd and cruel to require of any man what is beyond his power to comply with; and, as the scriptures declare that, *No man* CAN *come to Christ, except the Father draw him;* and that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither* CAN *he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;* it is concluded, that these are things to which the sinner, while unregenerate, is under no obligation.

The answer that has frequently been made to this reasoning is, in effect, as follows: 'Men are no more unable to do things spiritually good, than they are to be subject to the law of God, which *the carnal mind is not, nor* CAN *be.* And the reason why we have no power to comply with these things is, we have lost it by the fall: but, though we have lost our ability to obey, God has not lost his authority to command.' There is some truth in this answer; but it is apprehended to be insufficient. It is true, that sinners are no more and no otherwise unable to do any thing spiritually good, than they are to yield a perfect submission to God's holy law; and that the inability of both arises from the same source—the original apostacy of human nature. Yet, if the nature of this inability were direct, or such as consisted in the want of *rational faculties, bodily powers,* or *external advantages;* its being the consequence of the fall would not set aside the objection. Some men pass through life totally insane. This may be one of the *effects* of sin; yet the scriptures never convey any idea of such persons being dealt with, at the last judgment, on the same ground as if they had been sane. On the contrary, they teach, that *to whom much is given, of him much shall be required.** Another is deprived of the sight of his eyes, and so rendered unable to read the scriptures. This

* Luke xii. 48.

also may be the *effect* of sin; and, in some cases, of his own personal misconduct: but, whatever punishment may be inflicted on him for such misconduct, he is not blameworthy for not reading the scriptures, after he had lost his ability to do so. A third possesses the use of reason, and of all his senses, and members; but has no other opportunity of knowing the will of God than what is afforded him by the light of nature. It would be equally repugnant to scripture and reason, to suppose that this man will be judged by the same rule as others who have lived under the light of revelation. *As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.**

The inability, in each of these cases, is *natural*; and, to whatever degree it exists, let it arise from what cause it may, it excuses its subject of blame, in the account of both God and man. The law of God itself requires no creature to love him, or obey him, beyond his *strength*, or with more than all the powers which he possesses. If the inability of sinners to believe in Christ, or to do things spiritually good, were of this nature, it would undoubtedly form an excuse in their favour; and it must be as absurd to exhort them to such duties, as to exhort the blind to look, the deaf to hear, or the dead to walk. But the inability of sinners is not such as to induce the Judge of all the earth (who cannot do other than right) to abate in his demands. It is a fact that he does require them, (and that, without paying any regard to their inability,) *to love him*, and *to fear him*, and *to do all his commandments always*. *The blind* are admonished *to look*, *the deaf to hear*, and *the dead to arise*.† If there were no other proof than what is afforded by this single fact, it ought to satisfy us that the blindness, deafness, and death of sinners, to that which is spiritually good, is of a different nature from that which furnishes an excuse. This, however, is not the only ground of proof. The thing speaks for itself. There is an essential difference between an inability which is independent of the inclination, and one that is owing to nothing else. It is equally impossible, no doubt, for any person to do that which he

* Rom. ii. 12. † Isa. xlii. 18. Ephes. v. 14.

has no mind to do, as to perform that which surpasses his natural powers; and hence it is, that the same terms are used in the one case, as in the other. Those who were under the dominion of envy and malignity, COULD NOT *speak peaceably*; and those who have *eyes full of adultery*, CANNOT *cease from sin*. Hence, also, the following language: *How* CAN *ye, being evil, speak good things?—The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither* CAN *he know them.—The carnal mind is enmity against God; and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed* CAN *be.—They that are in the flesh* CANNOT *please God.—No man* CAN *come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.* It is also true, that many have affected to treat the distinction between natural and moral inability as more curious than solid. 'If we be unable,' say they, 'we are unable. As to the nature of the inability, it is a matter of no account. Such distinctions are perplexing to plain Christians, and beyond their capacity.' But, surely, the plainest and weakest Christian, in reading his Bible, if he pay any regard to what he reads, must perceive a manifest difference between the blindness of Bartimeus, who was ardently desirous that *he might receive his sight*, and that of the unbelieving Jews, who *closed their eyes, lest they should see, and be converted, and be healed*;* and between the want of the natural sense of hearing, and the state of those *who have ears, but hear not.*

So far as my observation extends, those persons who affect to treat this distinction as a matter of mere curious speculation, are as ready to make use of it as other people, where their own interest is concerned. If they be accused of injuring their fellow-creatures, and can allege that what they did was not *knowingly*, or of *design*, I believe they never fail to do so: or, when charged with neglecting their duty to a parent, or a master, if they can say, in truth, that they were *unable* to do it at the time, *let their will have been ever so good*, they are never known to omit the plea; and should such a master or parent reply, by suggesting that their want of ability arose from want of *inclination*, they would very easily understand it to be the language of reproach, and be

* Mark x. 51. Matt. xiii. 15.

very earnest to maintain the contrary. You never hear a person, in such circumstances, reason as he does in religion. He does not say, 'If I be unable, I am unable; it is of no account whether my inability be of this kind or that:' but he labours with all his might to establish the difference. Now, if the subject be so clearly understood and acted upon, where interest is concerned, and never appears difficult but in religion, it is but too manifest where the difficulty lies. If, by fixing the guilt of our conduct upon our father Adam, we can sit comfortably in our nest; we shall be very averse from a sentiment that tends to disturb our repose, by planting a thorn in it.

It is sometimes objected, that the inability of sinners to believe in Christ, is not the effect of their depravity; for that Adam himself, in his purest state, was only a *natural man*, and had no power to perform spiritual duties. But this objection belongs to another topic, and has, I hope, been already answered. To this, however, it may be added, *The natural man who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) is not a man possessed of the holy image of God, as was Adam, but of mere natural accomplishments; as were the *wise men of the world*, the philosophers of Greece and Rome, to whom the things of God were *foolishness*. Moreover, if the inability of sinners to perform spiritual duties were of the kind alleged in the objection, they must be equally unable to commit the opposite sins. He that, from the constitution of his nature, is absolutely unable to understand, or believe, or love a certain kind of truth, must, of necessity, be alike unable to *shut his eyes* against it, to disbelieve, to reject, or to hate it. But it is manifest that all men are capable of the latter; it must, therefore, follow, that nothing but the depravity of their heart renders them incapable of the former.

Some writers, as has been already observed, have allowed, that sinners are the subjects of an inability which arises from their depravity: but they still contend that this is not *all*; but that they are both *naturally* and *morally* unable to believe in Christ: and this they think agreeable to the scriptures, which represent them as both *unable* and *unwilling* to come to him for life. But these two kinds of inability cannot consist with

each other, so as both to exist in the same subject, and towards the same thing. A moral inability supposes a natural ability. He who never, in any state, was possessed of the power of seeing, cannot be said to *shut his eyes* against the light. If the Jews had not been possessed of natural powers, equal to the knowledge of Christ's doctrine, there had been no justice in that cutting question and answer, *Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye* CANNOT *hear my word.* A total physical inability must, of necessity, supersede a moral one. To suppose, therefore, that the phrase, *No man* CAN *come to me*, is meant to describe the former; and, *Ye* WILL NOT *come to me, that ye may have life*, the latter; is to suppose, that our Saviour taught what is self-contradictory.

Some have supposed, that, in attributing physical, or natural, power to men, we deny their *natural depravity*. Through the poverty of language, words are obliged to be used in different senses. When we speak of men as *by nature* depraved, we do not mean to convey the idea of sin being an essential part of human nature, or of the constitution of man as man: our meaning is, that it is not a mere effect of education and example; but is, from his very birth, so interwoven through all his powers, so engrained, as it were, in his very soul, as to grow up with him, and become natural to him.

On the other hand, when the term *natural* is used, as opposed to *moral*, and applied to the powers of the soul, it is designed to express those faculties which are strictly a part of our nature as men, and which are necessary to our being accountable creatures. By confounding these ideas, we may be always disputing, and bring nothing to an issue.

Finally: It is sometimes suggested, that, to attribute to sinners a natural ability of performing things spiritually good, is to nourish their self-sufficiency; and that to represent it as only *moral*, is to suppose that it is not insuperable, but may, after all, be overcome by efforts of their own. But surely it is not necessary, in order to destroy a spirit of self-sufficiency, to deny that we are men, and accountable creatures; which is all that natural ability supposes. If any person imagine it possible, of his own accord, to choose that from which he is utterly averse, let him make the trial.

Some have alleged, that "natural power is only sufficient

to perform natural things; and that spiritual power is required to the performance of spiritual things." But this statement is far from accurate. Natural power is as necessary to the performance of spiritual, as of natural things: we must possess the powers of men, in order to perform the duties of good men. And as to spiritual power, or, which is the same thing, a right state of mind, it is not properly a faculty of the soul, but a quality which it possesses; and which, though it be essential to the *actual performance* of spiritual obedience, yet is not necessary to our being under *obligation* to perform it.

If a traveller, from a disinclination to the western continent, should direct his course perpetually towards the east, he would, in time, arrive at the place which he designed to shun. In like manner, it has been remarked, by some who have observed the progress of this controversy, that there are certain important points in which false Calvinism, in its ardent desire to steer clear of Arminianism, is brought to agree with it. We have seen already, that they agree in their notions of the original holiness in Adam, and in the inconsistency of the duty of believing with the doctrines of election and particular redemption. To this may be added, they are agreed in making the *grace of God* necessary to the accountableness of sinners with regard to spiritual obedience. The one pleads for graceless sinners being free from obligation; the other admits of obligation, but founds it on the notion of universal grace. Both are agreed, that where there is no grace, there is no duty. But if grace be the ground of obligation, it is no more grace, but debt. It is that which, if any thing good be required of the sinner, cannot justly be withheld. This is, in effect, acknowledged by both parties. The one contends, that where no grace is given, there can be no obligation to spiritual obedience; and, therefore, acquits the unbeliever of guilt in not coming to Christ that he might have life, and in the neglect of all spiritual religion. The other argues, that, if man be totally depraved, and no grace be given him to counteract his depravity; he is blameless: that is, his depravity is no longer depravity; he is innocent in the account of his judge: consequently, he can need no saviour; and, if justice be done him, will be exempt from punishment, (if not entitled to hea-

ven,) in virtue of his personal innocence. Thus the whole system of grace is rendered void: and fallen angels, who have not been partakers of it, must be in a far preferable state to that of fallen men, who, by Jesus taking hold of their nature, are liable to become blameworthy and eternally lost. But, if the essential powers of the mind be the same, whether we be pure or depraved, and be sufficient to render any creature an accountable being, whatever be his disposition, grace is what its proper meaning imports—*free favour*, or *favour towards the unworthy;* and the redemption of Christ, with all its holy and happy effects, is what the scriptures represent it—*necessary to deliver us from the state into which we were fallen, antecedently to its being bestowed.**

OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The scriptures clearly ascribe both repentance and faith, wherever they exist, to divine influence.† From hence, many have concluded, that they cannot be *duties* required of sinners. If sinners have been required from the pulpit to repent or believe, they have thought it sufficient to show the absurdity of such exhortations, by saying, 'A heart of flesh is of *God's giving: faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God:*' as though these things were inconsistent, and it were improper to exhort to any thing but what can be done of ourselves, and without the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The whole weight of this objection rests upon the supposition *that we do not stand in need of the Holy Spirit to enable us to comply with our duty.* If this principle were admitted, we must conclude, either, with the Arminians and Socinians, that "faith and conversion, seeing they are acts of obedience, cannot be wrought of God;"‡ or, with the objector, that, seeing they are wrought of God, they cannot be acts of obedience. But, if we need the influence of the Holy Spirit *to enable us to do our duty*, both these methods of reasoning fall to the ground.

And is it not manifest, that the godly, in all ages, have considered themselves insufficient to perform those things to

* Rom. v. 5. 15—21. Heb. ix. 27, 28. 1 Thes. i. 10.
† Ezek. xi. 19. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Ephes. i. 19. ii. 8.
‡ See Owen's *Display of Arminianism*, Chap. X.

which, nevertheless, they acknowledge themselves to be obliged? The rule of duty is what God requires of us: but he requires those things which good men have always confessed themselves, on account of the sinfulness of their nature, insufficient to perform. He *desireth truth in the inward part*: yet an Apostle acknowledges, *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.**—*The Spirit*, saith he, *helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for* AS WE OUGHT: *but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* The same things are required in one place, which are promised in another: *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart.—I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*† When the sacred writers speak of the divine precepts, they neither disown them, nor infer from them a self-sufficiency to conform to them; but turn them into prayer: *Thou hast* COMMANDED *us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!*‡ In fine, the scriptures uniformly teach us, that all our sufficiency to do good, or to abstain from evil, is from above: repentance and faith, therefore, may be duties, notwithstanding their being the gifts of God.

If our insufficiency for this, and every other good thing, arose from a natural impotency, it would indeed excuse us from obligation; but, if it arise from the sinful dispositions of our hearts, it is otherwise. Those whose eyes are *full of adultery, and* THEREFORE, *cannot cease from sin*, are under the same obligations to live a chaste and sober life, as other men are: yet, if ever their dispositions be changed, it must be by an influence from without them; for it is not in them to relinquish their courses of their own accord. I do not mean to suggest, that this species of evil prevails in all sinners: but sin, in some form, prevails, and has its dominion over them, and to such a degree that nothing but the grace of God can effectually cure it. It is depravity only that renders the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit necessary. "The

* Psalm li. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

† 1 Sam. xii. 24. Jer. xxxii. 40. ‡ Psa. cxix. 4, 5.

bare and outward declaration of the word of God," says a great writer,* "ought to have largely sufficed to make it to be believed, if our own blindness and stubbornness did not withstand it. But our mind hath such an inclination to vanity, that it can never cleave fast to the truth of God; and such a dulness, that it is always blind, and cannot see the light thereof. Therefore there is nothing available done by the word, without the enlightening of the Holy Spirit."

ON THE NECESSITY OF A DIVINE PRINCIPLE, IN ORDER TO BELIEVING.

About fifty years ago, much was written in favour of this position by Mr. Brine. Of late years, much has been advanced against it, by Mr. Booth, Mr. M'Lean, and others. I cannot pretend to determine what ideas Mr. Brine attached to the term *principle*. He probably meant something different from what God requires of every intelligent creature; and if this were admitted to be necessary to believing, such believing could not be the duty of any, except those who were possessed of it. I have no interest in this question, farther than to maintain, that *the moral state, or disposition of the soul, has a necessary influence on believing in Christ.* This I feel no difficulty in admitting, on the one side, nor in defending, on the other. If faith were an involuntary reception of the truth, and were produced merely by the power of evidence; if the prejudiced or unprejudiced state of the mind had no influence in retarding or promoting it: in fine, if it were wholly an intellectual, and not a moral exercise; nothing more than rationality, or a capacity of understanding the nature of evidence, would be necessary to it. In this case, it would not be a *duty*; nor would unbelief be a *sin*, but a mere mistake of the judgment. Nor could there be any need of divine influence; for the special influences of the Holy Spirit are not required for the production of that which has no holiness in it. But if, on the other hand, faith in Christ be that *on* which the *will* has an influence; if it be the same thing as *receiving the love of the truth, that we may be saved;* if aversion of heart be the only obstruction to it, and the removal of that aversion be the kind of influence necessary to produce it; (and whether these

* Calvin: See *Institutes*, Book III. Chap. II.

things be so, or not, let the evidence adduced in the Second Part of this Treatise determine ;*) a contrary conclusion must be drawn. The mere force of evidence, however clear, will not change the disposition of the heart. In this case, therefore, and this only, it requires *the exceeding greatness of divine power* to enable a sinner to believe.

But, as I design to notice this subject more fully in an *Appendix*, I shall here pass it over, and attend to the *objection* to faith being a duty, which is derived from it. If a sinner cannot believe in Christ without being renewed in the spirit of his mind; believing, it is suggested, cannot be his *immediate* duty. It is remarkable in how many points the system here opposed agrees with Arminianism. The latter admits believing to be the duty of the unregenerate; but, on this account, denies the necessity of a divine change in order to it. The former admits the necessity of a divine change in order to believing; but, on this account, denies that believing can be the duty of the unregenerate. In this they are agreed, that the necessity of a divine change and the obligation of the sinner cannot comport with each other.

But, if this argument have any force, it will prove more than its abettors wish it to prove. It will prove that *divine influence* is not necessary to believing; or, if it be, that faith *is not the* IMMEDIATE *duty of the sinner*. Whether divine influence change the bias of the heart in order to believing, or cause us to believe without such change, or only *assist* us in it, makes no difference as to this argument: if it be antecedent, and necessary to believing, believing cannot be a duty, according to the reasoning in the objection, till it is communicated. On this principle, Socinians, who allow faith to be the sinner's *immediate* duty, deny it to be the gift of God.†

To me, it appears that the necessity of divine influence, and even of a change of heart, prior to believing, is perfectly consistent with its being the immediate duty of the unregenerate. If that disposition of heart which is produced by the Holy Spirit, be *no more than every intelligent creature ought at all times to possess*, the want of it can afford no ex-

* Particularly, *Propositions* IV. V.

† *Narrative of the York Baptists*, Letter III.

cuse for the omission of any duty to which it is necessary. Let the contrary supposition be applied to the common affairs of life, and we shall see what a result will be produced.

I am not possessed of a principle of common honesty:

But no man is obliged to exercise a principle which he does not possess:

Therefore I am not obliged to live in the exercise of common honesty!

While reasoning upon the absence of moral principles, we are exceedingly apt to forget ourselves, and to consider them as a kind of natural accomplishment, which we are not obliged to possess, but merely to improve, in case of being possessed of them; and that, till then, the whole of our duty consists either in *praying* to God to bestow them upon us, or in *waiting* till he shall graciously be pleased to do so. But what should we say, if a man were to reason thus with respect to the common duties of life? Does the whole duty of a dishonest man consist in either *praying* to God to make him honest, or *waiting* till he does so? Every one, in this case, feels that an honest heart is *itself* that which he ought to possess. Nor would any man, in matters that concerned *his own interest*, think of excusing such deficiency by alleging that the poor man *could not* give it to himself, nor act otherwise than he did, till he possessed it.

If an upright heart towards God and man be not *itself* required of us, nothing is or can be required; for all duty is comprehended in the acting-out of the heart. Even those who would compromise the matter, by allowing that sinners are not obliged to *possess* an upright heart, but merely to *pray* and *wait* for it, if they would oblige themselves to understand words, before they used them, must perceive that there is no meaning in this language. For, if it be the duty of a sinner to *pray* to God for an upright heart, and to *wait* for its bestowment, I would inquire, whether these exercises ought to be attended to *sincerely*, or *insincerely*; with a true desire after the object sought, or without it? It will not be pretended, that he ought to use these means insincerely: but to say he ought to use them sincerely, or with a desire after that for which he prays and waits, is equivalent to saying, he ought to *be sincere*; which is the same thing as possessing an

upright heart. If a sinner be destitute of all desire after God, and spiritual things, and set on evil; all the forms into which his duty may be thrown, will make no difference. The carnal heart will meet it in every approach, and repel it. Exhort him to repentance: he tells you he cannot repent; his heart is too hard to melt, or be any ways affected with his situation. Say, with a certain writer, he ought to *endeavour* to repent: he answers, he has no heart to go about it. Tell him he must pray to God to give him a heart: he replies, prayer is the expression of desire, and I have none to express. What shall we say then? Seeing he cannot repent, cannot find in his heart to *endeavour* to repent, cannot *pray* sincerely for a heart to make such an endeavour; shall we deny his assertions, and tell him he is not so wicked as he makes himself? This might be more than we should be able to maintain. Or shall we allow them, and acquit him of obligation? Rather ought we not to return to the place where we set out, admonishing him, as the scriptures direct, to *repent and believe the gospel:* declaring to him that what he calls his inability is his sin and shame; and warning him against the idea of its availing him another day; not in expectation that, of his own accord, he may change his mind, but in hope *that God peradventure may give him repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.*

This doctrine, it will be said, must drive sinners to *despair.* Be it so: it is such despair as I wish to see prevail. Until a sinner despair of any help from himself, he will never fall into the arms of sovereign mercy: but if once we are convinced *that there is no help in us*, and that this, so far from excusing us, is a proof of the greatest wickedness, we shall then begin to pray as *lost sinners;* and such prayer, offered *in the name of Jesus*, will be heard.

Other objections may have been advanced; but I hope it will be allowed, that the most important ones have been fairly stated: whether they have been answered, the reader will judge.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

FIRST: *Though faith be a duty, the requirement of it is not to be considered as a mere exercise of* AUTHORITY, *but of* INFINITE GOODNESS; *binding us to pursue our best interest.* If a message of peace were sent to a company of rebels, who had been conquered, and lay at the mercy of their injured sovereign, they must, of course, be required to repent, and embrace it, ere they could be interested in it; yet such a requirement would not be considered, by impartial men, as a mere exercise of authority. It is true, the authority of the sovereign would accompany it, and the proceeding would be so conducted as that the honour of his government should be preserved: but the grand character of the message would be mercy. Neither would the goodness of it be diminished by the authority which attended it, nor by the malignant disposition of the parties. Should some of them even prove incorrigible, and be executed as hardened traitors, the mercy of the sovereign in sending the message would be just the same. *They* might possibly object, that the government which they had resisted was hard and rigid; that their parents before them had always disliked it, and had taught them from their childhood to despise it; that to require them to embrace *with all their hearts* a message, the very import of which was that they had transgressed *without cause, and deserved to die*, was too humiliating for flesh and blood to bear; and that, if he would not pardon them without their cordially subscribing such an instrument, he had better have left them to die as they were: for, instead of its being good news to them, it would prove the means of aggravating their misery. Every loyal subject, however, would easily perceive that it *was* good news, and a great instance of mercy, however they might treat it, and of whatever evil, through their perverseness, it might be the occasion.

If faith in Christ be the duty of the ungodly, it must, of

course, follow, that every sinner, whatever be his character, is completely *warranted* to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. In other words, he has every possible encouragement to relinquish his former attachment and confidences, and to commit his soul into the hands of Jesus to be saved. If believing in Christ, be a privilege belonging only to the regenerate, and no sinner, while unregenerate, be warranted to exercise it, as Mr. Brine maintains,* it will follow, either that a sinner may know himself to be regenerate before he believes, or that the first exercise of faith is an act of presumption. That the bias of the heart requires to be turned to God antecedently to believing, has been admitted; because the nature of believing is such, that it cannot be exercised while the soul is under the dominion of wilful blindness, hardness, and aversion. These dispositions are represented in the scriptures, as a bar in the way of faith, as being inconsistent with it;† and which, consequently, require to be taken out of the way. But, whatever necessity there may be for a change of heart in order to believing, it is neither necessary nor possible that the party should be *conscious* of it till he has believed. It is necessary that the eyes of a blind man should be opened before he can see: but it is neither necessary nor possible for him to know that his eyes are open till he does see. It is only by surrounding objects appearing to his view, that he knows the obstructing film to be removed. But, if regeneration be necessary to *warrant* believing, and yet it be impossible to obtain a consciousness of it till we have believed, it follows, that the first exercise of faith is without foundation; that is, it is not faith, but presumption.

If believing be the *duty* of every sinner to whom the gospel is preached, there can be no doubt as to a *warrant* for it, whatever be his character: and to maintain the latter, without admitting the former, would be reducing it to a mere matter of discretion. It might be *inexpedient* to reject the way of salvation, but it could not be *unlawful*.

Secondly: Though believing in Christ is a compliance with a duty, yet it is not *as a duty*, or by way of *reward* for a vir-

* *Motives to Love and Unity, &c.* pp. 38, 39.

† See Proposition IV. p. 56.

tuous act, that we are said to be *justified by it.* It is true, God does reward the services of his people, as the scriptures abundantly teach: but this *follows* upon justification. We must stand accepted in the Beloved, before our services can be acceptable or rewardable. Moreover, if we were justified by faith *as a duty*, justification *by faith* could not be, as it is, opposed to justification *by works: To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.** The scripture doctrine of *justification by faith*, in opposition to the works of the law, appears, to me, as follows: By believing in Jesus Christ, the sinner becomes vitally *united* to him, or, as the scriptures express it, *joined to the Lord*, and is of *one spirit with him*;† and this union, according to the divine constitution, as revealed in the gospel, is the ground of an interest in his righteousness. Agreeable to this is the following language: *There is now, therefore,* NO CONDEMNATION *to them that are* IN *Christ Jesus.—Of him are ye* IN *Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us* RIGHTEOUSNESS, *&c.—That I may be found* IN *him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.* As the union which, in the order of nature, precedes a revealed interest in Christ's righteousness, is spoken of in allusion to that of marriage, the one may serve to illustrate the other. A rich and generous character walking in the fields, espies a forlorn female infant, deserted by some unfeeling parent in the day that it was born, and left to perish. He sees its helpless condition, and resolves to save it. Under his kind patronage the child grows up to maturity. He now resolves to make her his wife: *casts his skirt over her, and she becomes his.* She is now, according to the public statutes of the realm, interested in all his possessions. Great is the transition! Ask her, in the height of her glory, how she became possessed of all this wealth; and, if she retain a proper spirit, she will answer in some such manner as this: 'It was not mine, but my deliverer's; his who rescued me from death. It is no reward of any good deeds on my part: it is *by marriage:* . . . it is *of grace.*

* Rom. iv. 2—5. † 1 Cor. vi. 17.

It is easy to perceive, in this case, that it was necessary she should be voluntarily married to her husband, before she could, according to the public statutes of the realm, be interested in his possessions; and that she now enjoys those possessions *by marriage:* yet who would think of asserting, that her consenting to be his wife was a meritorious act, and that all his possessions were given her as the reward of it?

Thirdly: From the foregoing view of things, we may perceive *the alarming situation of unbelievers.* By unbelievers, I mean not only avowed Infidels, but all persons who hear, or have opportunity to hear, the gospel, or to come at the knowledge of what is taught in the holy scriptures, and do not cordially embrace it. It is an alarming thought to be a *sinner* against the greatest and best of beings: but to be an *unbelieving sinner*, is much more so. There is deliverance from *the curse of the law*, through him who was *made a curse for us.* But if, like the barren fig-tree, we stand from year to year, under gospel-culture, and bear no fruit, we may expect to fall under the curse of the Saviour; and who is to deliver us from this? *If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so* GREAT *salvation?*

We are in the habit of pitying heathens, who are enthralled by abominable superstition, and immersed in the immoralities which accompany it: but to live in the midst of gospel-light, and reject it, or even disregard it, is abundantly more criminal, and will be followed with a heavier punishment. We feel for the condition of profligate characters; for swearers, and drunkards, and fornicators, and liars, and thieves, and murderers: but these crimes become ten-fold more heinous in being committed under the light of revelation, and in contempt of all the warnings and gracious invitations of the gospel. The most profligate character, who never possessed these advantages, may be far less criminal, in the sight of God, than the most sober and decent who possesses, and disregards them. It was on this principle that such a heavy wo was denounced against Chorazin and Bethsaida, and that their sin was represented as exceeding that of Sodom.

The gospel wears an aspect of mercy towards *sinners;* but

towards *unbelieving* sinners the scriptures deal wholly in the language of threatening. *I am come*, saith our Saviour, *a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.* IF ANY MAN HEAR MY WORDS, AND BELIEVE NOT, *I judge him not:* (that is, not at present:) *for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.** It will be of but small account, in that day, that we have escaped a few of the *lusts of the flesh*, if we have been led captive by those of the *mind.* If the greatest gift of heaven be set at naught by us, through the pride of science, or a vain conceit of our own righteousness, how shall we stand when he appeareth?

It will then be found, that a price was in our hands to get wisdom, but that we had *no heart to it:* and that herein consists our sin, and from hence proceeds our ruin. God called, and we would not hearken; he stretched out his hand, and no man regarded; therefore, he will laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh. It is intimated, both in the Old and New Testament, that the recollection of the means of salvation having been within our reach, will be a bitter aggravation to our punishment. *They come unto thee*, saith the Lord to Ezekiel, *as the people come, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them.—And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come!)* THEN SHALL THEY KNOW THAT A PROPHET HATH BEEN AMONG THEM.† To the same purpose our Saviour speaks of them who should reject the doctrine of his apostles; *Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you:* NOTWITHSTANDING, BE YE SURE OF THIS, THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU.‡

Great as is the sin of unbelief, however, it is not unpardonable: it becomes such only by persisting in it till death. Saul of Tarsus was an unbeliever, yet he *obtained mercy:* and his being an unbeliever, rather than a presumptuous opposer of

* John xii. 46—48. † Ezek. xxxiii. 31 33. ‡ Luke x. 10, 11.

Christ against conviction, placed him within the pale of forgiveness, and is, therefore, assigned as a reason of it.*

This consideration affords a hope even to unbelievers. O ye self-righteous despisers of a free salvation through a Mediator, be it known to you, that there is no other name given under heaven, or among men, by which you can be saved! To him whom you have disregarded and despised, you must either voluntarily or involuntarily submit. *To him every knee shall bow.* You cannot go back into a state of non-existence, however desirable it might be to many of you: for God hath stamped immortality upon your natures. You cannot turn to the right hand, nor to the left, with any advantage: whether you give a loose to your inclination, or put a force upon it by an assumed devotion, each will lead to the same issue. Neither can you stand still. Like a vessel in a tempestuous ocean, you must go this way, or that; and, go which way you will, if it be not to Jesus, as utterly unworthy, you are only heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. Whether you sing, or pray, or hear, or preach, or feed the poor, or till the soil; if *self* be your object, and *Christ* be disregarded, all is sin,† and will all issue in disappointment: *the root is rottenness, and the blossom shall go up as the dust.* Whither will you go? Jesus invites you to come to *him.* His servants beseech you, in his name, to be reconciled to God. The Spirit saith, *Come;* and the bride saith, *Come;* and *whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.* An eternal heaven is before you, in one direction; and an eternal hell, in the other. Your answer is required. Be one thing, or another. Choose you, this day, whom ye will serve. For our parts, we will abide by our Lord and Saviour. If you continue to reject him, so it must be: *nevertheless, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come* NIGH *unto you!*

Finally: *From what has been advanced, we may form a judgment of our duty, as ministers of the word, in dealing with the unconverted.* The work of the Christian ministry, it has been said, is to *preach the gospel,* or to hold up the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, as the only way of a sinner's salvation. This is, doubtless, true; and if this be not

* 1 Tim. i. 13. † Prov. xv. 8, 9. xxviii. 9. xxi. 4.

the leading theme of our ministrations, we had better be any thing than preachers. *Wo unto us, if we preach not the gospel!* The minister, who, under a pretence of pressing the practice of religion, neglects its all-important principles, labours in the fire. He may enforce duty till duty freezes upon his lips: neither his auditors nor himself will greatly regard it. But, on the contrary, if by *preaching the gospel* be meant the insisting solely upon the blessings and privileges of religion, to the neglect of exhortations, calls, and warnings; it is sufficient to say, that such was not the practice of Christ and his apostles. It will not be denied, that they preached the gospel: yet they warned, admonished, and entreated sinners to *repent and believe; to believe while they had the light; to labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life; to repent, and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out; to come to the marriage-supper, for that all things were ready:* in fine, *to be reconciled unto God.*

If the inability of sinners to perform things spiritually good were natural, or such as existed independent of their present choice, it would be absurd and cruel to address them in such language. No one in his senses would think of calling the blind to look, the deaf to hear, or the dead to rise up and walk: and of threatening them with punishment, in case of their refusal. But if the blindness arise from the love of darkness rather than light; if the deafness resemble that of the adder, which stoppeth her ear, and will not hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely; and, if the death consist in alienation of heart from God, and the absence of all desire after him; there is no absurdity or cruelty in such addresses.

But enforcing the duties of religion, either on sinners or saints, is, by some, called *preaching the law.* If it were so, it is enough for us, that such was the preaching of Christ and his apostles. It is folly and presumption, to affect to be more evangelical than they were. All practical preaching, however, is not preaching the law. That only, I apprehend, ought to be censured as preaching the law, in which our acceptance with God is, in some way or other, placed to the account of our obedience to its precepts. When eternal life is represented as the reward of repentance, faith, and sincere

obedience, (as it too frequently is, and that, under the complaisant form of being '*through* the merits of Christ;') this is preaching the law, and not the gospel. But the precepts of the law may be illustrated and enforced for evangelical purposes; as tending to vindicate the divine character and government—to convince of sin—to show the necessity of a Saviour, with the freeness of salvation—to ascertain the nature of true religion—and to point out the rule of Christian conduct.—Such a way of introducing the divine law in subservience to the gospel, is, properly speaking, preaching the gospel; for the end denominates the action.

If the foregoing principles be just, it is the duty of ministers not only to exhort their carnal auditors to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls; but IT IS AT OUR PERIL TO EXHORT THEM TO ANY THING SHORT OF IT, OR WHICH DOES NOT INVOLVE OR IMPLY IT. I am aware that such an idea may startle many of my readers, and some who are engaged in the Christian ministry. We have sunk into such a compromising way of dealing with the unconverted, as to have well nigh lost the spirit of the primitive preachers; and hence it is, that sinners of every description can sit so quietly as they do, year after year, in our places of worship. It was not so with the hearers of Peter and Paul. They were either *pricked in the heart* in one way, or *cut to the heart* in another. Their preaching commended itself to *every man's conscience in the sight of God*. How shall we account for this difference? Is there not some important errour or defect in our ministrations? I have no reference to the preaching of those who disown the divinity or atonement of Christ, on the one hand, whose sermons are little more than harangues on morality; nor to that of gross Antinomians, on the other, whose chief business it is to feed the vanity and malignity of one part of their audience, and the sin-extenuating principles of the other. These are errours, the folly of which is *manifest to all men* who pay any serious regard to the religion of the New Testament. I refer to those who are commonly reputed *evangelical*, and who approve of addresses to the unconverted. I hope no apology is necessary for an attempt to exhibit the scriptural manner of preaching. If it affects the labours of some of my brethren, I cannot deny but that it may also affect my own. I conceive,

there is scarcely a minister amongst us, whose preaching has not been more or less influenced by the lethargic systems of the age.

Christ and his apostles, without any hesitation, called on sinners to *repent and believe the gospel;* but we considering them as poor, impotent, and depraved creatures, have been disposed to drop this part of the Christian ministry. Some may have felt afraid of being accounted legal; others have really thought it inconsistent. Considering such things as beyond the *power* of their hearers, they seem to have contented themselves with pressing on them things which they *could* perform, still continuing the enemies of Christ; such as behaving decently in society, reading the scriptures, and attending the means of grace. Thus it is, that hearers of this description sit at ease in our congregations. Having done their duty, the minister has nothing more to say to them; nothing, however, unless it be to tell them, occasionally, that something more is *necessary* to salvation. But as this implies no guilt on their part, they sit unconcerned; conceiving that all that is required of them is, 'to lie in the way, and to wait the Lord's time.' But is this the religion of the scriptures? Where does it appear that the prophets or apostles ever treated that kind of inability, which is merely the effect of reigning aversion, as affording any excuse? And where have they descended in their exhortations to things which might be done, and the parties still continue the enemies of God? Instead of leaving out every thing of a spiritual nature, because their hearers *could* not find in their hearts to comply with it, it may safely be affirmed, they exhorted to *nothing else;* treating such inability not only as of *no account*, with regard to the lessening of obligation, but as rendering the subjects of it worthy of the severest rebuke. *To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they* CANNOT *hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, and they have no delight in it.* What then? Did the prophet desist from his work, and exhort them to something to which, in their present state of mind, they *could* hearken? Far from it. He delivers his message, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear. *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask*

for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. And did this induce him to desist? No: he proceeds to read their doom, and calls the world to witness its justice: *Hear, O earth! Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.** Many of those who attended the ministry of Christ, were of the same spirit. Their *eyes were blinded*, and their *hearts hardened*, so that they COULD NOT BELIEVE: yet, paying no manner of regard to this kind of inability, he exhorted them *to believe in the light while they had the light.* And when they had *heard and believed not*, he proceeded, without hesitation, to declare, *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*†

Such, also, were many of Paul's hearers at Rome. They *believed not:* but did Paul, seeing they *could not* receive the gospel, recommend to them something which they *could* receive? No, he gave them *one word* at parting: *Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*‡

When did Jesus, or his apostles, go about merely to form the *manners* of men? Where do they exhort to duties which a man may comply with, and yet miss of the kingdom of heaven? If a man *kept their sayings*, he was assured that he should *never see death.* In addressing the unconverted, they began by admonishing them to *repent and believe the gospel;* and, in the course of their labours, exhorted to all manner of duties; but all were to be done *spiritually;* or they would

* Jer. vi. 10—19. † John xii. 36. 48. ‡ Acts xxviii. 24—28.

not have acknowledged them them to have been done at all. Carnal duties, or duties to be performed otherwise than *to the glory of God*, had no place in their system.

The answer of our Lord to those carnal Jews, who inquired of him, *What they must do to work the works of God?* is worthy of special notice. Did Jesus give them to understand, that, as to believing in him, however willing they might be, it was a matter entirely beyond their power? that all the directions he had to give were, that they should attend the means, and wait for the moving of the waters? No: Jesus answered, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.** This was the *gate at the head of the way*, as the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has admirably represented it, to which sinners must be directed. A *worldly-wise* instructer may inculcate other duties; but the true *evangelist*, after the example of his Lord, will point to this as the first concern, and as that upon which every thing else depends.

There is another species of preaching which proceeds upon much the same principle Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, are allowed to be duties; but not *immediate* duties. The sinner is considered as *unable* to comply with them, and, therefore, they are not urged upon him: but, instead of them, he is directed to *pray for the Holy Spirit, to enable him to repent and believe;* and this, it seems, he *can* do, notwithstanding the aversion of his heart from every thing of the kind. But, if any man be required to pray for the Holy Spirit, it must be either sincerely, and in the name of Jesus; or insincerely, and in some other way. The latter, I suppose, will be allowed to be an abomination in the sight of God; he cannot, therefore, be required to do this; and, as to the former, it is just as difficult, and as opposite to the carnal heart, as repentance and faith themselves. Indeed, it amounts to the same thing: for a sincere desire after a spiritual blessing, presented in the name of Jesus, is no other than *the prayer of faith.*

Peter exhorted Simon to pray, not with an impenitent hreat, that he might obtain repentance; but with a penitent one, that he might obtain *forgiveness;* and this, no doubt, in the

* John vi. 29.

only way in which it was to be obtained, *through Jesus Christ*. Repent, saith he, *and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*. Our Saviour directed his disciples to pray for the *Holy Spirit:* but, surely, the prayer which they were encouraged to offer was to be *sincere*, and with an eye to the Saviour; that is, it was *the prayer of faith*, and, therefore, could not be a duty directed to be performed antecedently, and in order to the obtaining of it.

The mischief arising from this way of preaching is considerable. First: It gives up a very important question to the sinner, even that question which is at issue between God and conscience, on the one hand; and a self-righteous heart, on the other: namely, whether he be obliged *immediately* to repent and believe the gospel? 'I could find nothing in the scriptures,' says he, 'that would give me any comfort in my present condition; nothing short of *repent and believe*, which are things I *cannot* comply with: but I have gained it from my good minister. Now my heart is at ease. I am not obliged *immediately* to repent, and sue for mercy in the name of Jesus. It is not, therefore, my sin that I do not. All I am obliged to is, to pray God to help me to do so; and that I do.' Thus, after a bitter conflict with scripture and conscience, which have pursued him through all his windings, and pressed upon him the call of the gospel, he finds a shelter in the house of God! Such counsel, instead of aiding the sinner's convictions, (which, as *labourers with God*, is our proper business,) has, many a time, been equal to a victory over them, or, at least, to the purchase of an armistice. Secondly: It *deceives* the soul. He understands it as a compromise, and so acts upon it. For though he be, in fact, as far from sincerely praying for repentance, as from repenting; and just as unable to desire faith in Christ, as to exercise it; yet he does not think so. He reckons himself very desirous of these things. The reason is, he takes that *indirect* desire after them, which consists in wishing to be converted, (or any thing, however disagreeable in itself,) that he may escape the wrath to come, to be the desire of grace; and, being conscious of possessing this, he considers himself in a fair way, at least, of being converted. Thus he deceives his soul; and thus he is helped forward in his delusion! Nor is this all: he feels himself set at liberty

from the *hard* requirement of *returning immediately to God, by Jesus Christ, as utterly unworthy;* and being told to pray that he may be enabled to do so, he supposes that such prayer will avail him, or that God will give him the power of repenting and believing, in answer to his prayers; prayers, be it observed, which must necessarily be offered up, with an impenitent, unbelieving heart. This just suits his self-righteous spirit: but, alas, all is delusion!

'You have no relief, then,' say some, 'for the sinner.' I answer, if the gospel, or any of its blessings, will relieve him, there is no want of relief. But, if there be nothing in Christ, or grace, or heaven, that will suit his inclination, it is not for me to furnish him with any thing else, or to encourage him to hope that things will come to a good issue. The only possible way of relieving a sinner, while his heart is averse from God, is by lowering the requirements of heaven to meet his inclination; or, in some way, to model the gospel to his mind. But, to relieve him in this manner, is at my peril! If I were commissioned to address a company of men who had engaged in an unprovoked rebellion against their king and country, what ought I to say to them? I might make use of authority, or entreaty, as occasion might require; I might caution, warn, threaten, or persuade them; but there would be a point from which I must not depart: *Be ye reconciled to your rightful sovereign;* lay down arms, and submit to mercy! To this I must inviolably adhere. They might allege, that they *could* not comply with such hard terms. Should I admit their plea, and direct them only to such conduct as might consist with a rebellious spirit, instead of recovering them from rebellion, I should go far towards denominating myself a rebel.

And, as Christ and his apostles never appear to have exhorted the unconverted to any thing which did not include or imply repentance and faith; so, *in all their explications of the divine law, and preaching against particular sins, their object was, to bring the sinner to this issue.* Though they directed them to no means, in order to get a penitent and believing heart, but to repentance and faith themselves; yet they *used means with them,* for that purpose. Thus our Lord expounded the law in his sermon on the mount, and concluded by enforcing such a *hearing of his sayings, and doing them,* as

should be equal to *digging deep, and building one's house upon a rock.* And thus the apostle Peter, having charged his countrymen with the murder of the Lord of glory, presently brings it to this issue: *Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.**

Some years ago, I met with a passage in Dr. Owen, on this subject, which, at that time, sunk deep into my heart; and the more observation I have since made, the more just his remarks appear. "It is the duty of ministers," says he, "to plead with men about their sins; but always remember, that it be done with that which is the proper end of law and gospel: that is, that they make use of the sin they speak against to the discovery of the *state* and *condition* wherein the sinner is; otherwise, haply, they may work men to formality and hypocrisy, but little of the true end of preaching the gospel will be brought about. It will not avail to beat a man off from his drunkenness into a sober formality. A skilful master of the assemblies lays his axe at the root, drives still at the heart. To inveigh against particular sins of ignorant, unregenerate persons, such as the land is full of, is a good work: but yet, though it may be done with great efficacy, vigour, and success; if this be all the effect of it, that they are set upon the most sedulous endeavours of mortifying their sins preached down; all that is done is but like the beating of an enemy in an open field, and driving him into an impregnable castle, not to be prevailed against. Get you, at any time, a sinner at the advantage on the account of any one sin whatever; have you any thing to take hold of him by, bring it to his *state* and *condition:* drive it up to the head, and there deal with him. To break men off from particular sins, and not to break their hearts, is to deprive ourselves of advantages of dealing with them."†

When a sinner is first seized with conviction, it is natural to suppose that he will abstain from many of his outward vices, though it be only for the quiet of his own mind: but it is not for us to administer comfort to him on this ground; as though, because he had *broken off* a few of *his sins*, he must needs have

* Matt. v. vi. vii. Acts iii. 14—19.

† *On the Mortification of Sin*, Chap. VII.

broken them off *by righteousness*, and either be in the road to life, or, at least, in a fair way of getting into it. It is one of the devices of Satan to alarm the sinner, and fill him with anxiety for the healing of outward eruptions of sin, while the inward part is overlooked, though it be nothing but sin. But we must not be aiding and abetting in these deceptions, nor administer any other relief than that which is held out in the gospel to sinners, *as sinners*. And when we see such characters violating their promises, and falling anew into their old sins, (which is frequently the case,) instead of joining with them in lamenting the event, and assisting them in healing the wound by renewed efforts of watchfulness, it becomes us, rather, to probe the wound; to make *use* of that which has appeared for the detecting of that which has not appeared; and so to point them to the blood that cleanses from all sin. "Poor soul!" says the eminent writer just quoted, "it is not thy sore finger, but thy hectic fever, from whence thy life is in danger!" If the cause be removed, the effects will cease. If the spring be purified, the waters will be healed, and the barren ground become productive.

I conclude, with a few remarks on the *order* of addressing exhortations to the unconverted. There being an established order in the workings of the human mind, it has been made a question, Whether the same ought not to be preserved in addressing it? As for instance: we cannot be convinced of sin, without previous ideas of God and moral government; nor of the need of a Saviour, without being convinced of sin; nor of the importance of salvation, without suitable conceptions of its evil nature. Hence, it may be supposed we ought not to teach any one of these truths till the preceding one is well understood; or, at least, that we ought not to preach the gospel without prefacing it by representing the just requirements of the law, our state as sinners, and the impossibility of being justified by the works of our hands. Doubtless, such representations are proper and necessary; but not so necessary as to render it improper, on any occasion, to introduce the doctrine of the gospel without them; and much less to refrain from teaching it till they are understood and felt. In this case, a minister must be reduced to the greatest perplexity; never knowing when it was

safe to introduce the salvation of Christ, lest some of his hearers should not be sufficiently prepared to receive it. The truth is, it is never unsafe to introduce this doctrine. There is such a connexion in divine truth, that, if any one part of it reach the mind, and find a place in the heart, all others, which may precede it in the order of things, will come in along with it. In receiving a doctrine, we receive not only what is expressed, but what is *implied* by it; and thus the doctrine of the cross may *itself* be the means of convincing us of the evil of sin. An example of this lately occurred in the experience of a child of eleven years of age. Her minister, visiting her under a threatening affliction, and perceiving her to be unaffected with her sinful condition, suggested, that "It was no small matter that brought down the Lord of glory into this world, to suffer and die: there must be something very offensive in the nature of sin against a holy God." This remark appears to have sunk into her heart, and to have issued in a saving change.* Divine truths are like chain-shot: they go together, and we need not perplex ourselves which should enter first; if any one enter, it will draw the rest after it.

Remarks nearly similar may be made concerning *duties*. Though the scriptures know nothing of duties to be performed without faith, or which do not *include* or *imply* it; yet they do not wait for the sinner's being possessed of faith, before they exhort him to other spiritual exercises; such as *seeking* the Lord, *loving* him, *serving* him, &c. nor need we lay any such restraints upon ourselves. Such is the *connexion* of the duties, as well as the truths of religion, that, if any one be truly complied with, we need not fear that the others will be wanting. If God be sought, loved, or served, we may be sure that Jesus is embraced; and, if Jesus be embraced, that sin is abhorred. Or, should things first occur to the mind in another order; should sin be the immediate object of our thoughts; if this be abhorred, the God against whom it is committed must, at the same instant, be loved; and the Saviour who was made a sacrifice to deliver us from it, embraced. Let any part of truth or holiness but find place in the heart, and the rest will be with it. Those parts which, in the

**Dying Exercises of Susannah Wright, of Weekly, near Kettering.*

order of things, are required to precede it, will come in by way of *implication;* and those which follow it, will be *produced* by it. Thus the primitive preachers seem to have had none of that scrupulosity which appears in the discourses and writings of some modern preachers. Sometimes, they exhorted sinners to *believe* in Jesus; but it was such belief as *implied* repentance for sin: sometimes, to *repent and be converted;* but it was such repentance and conversion as *included* believing: and, sometimes, to *labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life;* but it was such labouring as comprehended both repentance and faith.

Some have inferred, from the doctrine of justification by faith in opposition to the works of the law, that sinners ought not to be exhorted to any thing which comprises obedience to the law, either in heart or life, except we should preach the law to them for the purpose of conviction; and this, lest we should be found directing them to the works of their own hands, as the ground of acceptance with God. From the same principle, it has been concluded, that faith itself cannot include any holy disposition of the heart, because all holy disposition contains obedience to the law. If this reasoning be just, all exhorting of sinners to things expressive of a holy exercise of heart, is either improper, or requires to be understood as merely preaching the law for the purpose of conviction; as our Saviour directed the young ruler to *keep the commandments, if he would enter into life.* Yet the scriptures abound with such exhortations. Sinners are exhorted to *seek* God, to *serve* him with fear and joy, to *forsake* their wicked way, and *return* to him, to *repent* and *be converted.* These are manifestly exercises of the heart, and addressed to the unconverted. Neither are they to be understood as the requirements of a covenant of works. That covenant neither requires repentance, nor promises forgiveness. But sinners are directed to these things under a promise of *mercy* and *abundant pardon.* There is a wide difference between these addresses and the address of our Lord to the young ruler: that to which *he* was directed was the producing of a righteousness adequate to the demands of the law, which was naturally impossible: and our Lord's design was to show its impossibility, and, thereby, to convince him of the need of gospel-mer-

cy: but that to which the above directions point, is not to any natural impossibility, but to the very way of mercy. The manner in which the primitive preachers guarded against self-righteousness was very different from this. They were not afraid of exhorting either saints or sinners to holy exercises of heart, nor of connecting with them the promises of mercy. But, though they exhibited the promises of eternal life to any and every spiritual exercise, yet they never taught that it was on account of it; but of mere grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. The ground on which they took their stand was, *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* From hence, they inferred the impossibility of a sinner being justified in any other way than for the sake of him who was *made a curse for us:* and, from hence, it clearly follows, that, whatever holiness any sinner may possess, before, in, or after believing, it is of no account whatever, as a ground of acceptance with God. If we inculcate *this* doctrine, we need not fear exhorting sinners to holy exercises of heart, nor holding up the promises of mercy to all who thus return to God by Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX.

ON THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE EXISTENCE OF A HOLY DISPOSITION OF HEART BE NECESSARY TO BELIEVING.

IT is not from a fondness for controversy that I am induced to offer my sentiments on this subject. I feel myself called upon to do so, on two accounts. First: The leading principle in the foregoing treatise is implicated in the decision of it. If no holy disposition of heart be pre-supposed, or included in believing, it has nothing holy in it; and if it have nothing holy in it, it is absurd to plead for its being a *duty*. God requires nothing as a duty which is merely natural, or intellectual, or in which the will has no concern. Secondly: Mr.

M'Lean, in a second edition of his treatise on *The Commission of Christ*, has published several pages of animadversions on what I have advanced on this subject, and has charged me with very serious consequences; consequences which, if substantiated, will go to prove that I have subverted the great doctrine of justification by grace alone, without the works of the law.* It is true, he has made no mention of my name; owing, as I suppose, to what I had written being contained in two *private* letters, one of which was addressed to him. I certainly had no expectation, when I wrote those letters, that what I advanced would have been *publicly* answered. I do not pretend to understand so much of the *etiquette* of writing as to decide whether this conduct was proper: but if it were, some people may be tempted to think that it is rather dangerous to correspond with authors. I have no desire, however, to complain on this account, nor, indeed, on any other; except that my sentiments are very partially stated, and things introduced so much out of their connexion, that it is impossible for the reader to form any judgment concerning them.

I have the pleasure to agree with Mr. M'L. in considering the belief of the gospel as saving faith. Our disagreement on this subject is confined to the question, *What the belief of the gospel includes?* Mr. M'L. so explains it, as carefully to exclude every exercise of the heart or will, as either included in it, or having any influence upon it. Whatever of this exists in a believer, he considers as belonging to the *effects* of faith, rather than to faith itself. If I understand him, he pleads for such a belief of the gospel as has nothing in it of a *holy* nature, nothing of conformity to the moral law "in heart or life;" a *passive* reception of the truth, in which the will has no concern; and this because it is opposed to the *works of the law* in the article of justification.† On this ground, he accounts for the Apostle's language in Romans iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the* UNGODLY; understanding, by the terms *he that worketh not*, one that has done nothing yet which is pleasing to God; and, by the term *ungodly*, one that is actually an enemy to God. He does not suppose that God justifies unbelievers: if, there-

* Pages 74—86. † *On the Commission*, pp. 83—86.

fore, he justifies sinners, while in a state of enmity against him, there can be nothing in the nature of faith but what may consist with it. And true it is, if faith have nothing in it of a holy nature, nothing of conformity to the divine law "in heart or life," nothing of the exercise of any holy disposition of heart, it cannot denominate the subjects of it *godly*. Godliness must, in this case, consist merely in the fruits of faith; and these fruits being subsequent to justification, the sinner must, of course, be justified antecedently to his being the subject of godliness, or while he is actually the enemy of God.

If Mr. M'L. had only affirmed that faith is opposed to works, even to every good disposition of the heart, as the *ground of acceptance with God;* that we are not justified by it *as a work;* or that, whatever moral goodness it may possess, it is not *as such* that it is imputed unto us for righteousness; there had been no dispute between us. But this distinction he rejects, and endeavours to improve the caution of those who use it into a tacit acknowledgment, that their views of faith were very liable to misconstruction: in other words, that they border upon the doctrine of justification by works in so great a degree, as to be in danger of being mistaken for its advocates.* He is not contented with faith being opposed to works, in point of justification; it must also be opposed to them in its own nature. "Paul," he affirms, "did not look upon faith as a work." In short, if there be any possibility of drawing a certain conclusion from what a writer, in almost every form of speech, has advanced; it must be concluded, that he means to deny that there is any thing holy in the nature of faith; and that, could it be separated from its effects, (as he supposes it is in justification,) it would leave the person who possessed it, among the enemies of God.

Notwithstanding the above, however, Mr. M'L. allows faith to be a *duty*. He has largely, (and, I believe, successfully,) endeavoured to prove, that "faith is the *command* of God;" that it is "part of obedience to God;" that "to believe all that God says, is *right;*" and that unbelief, which is its opposite, is "a great and heinous sin."† But how can

* *Commission*, p. 76.

† *Belief of the Gospel Saving Faith*, pp. 34—44.

these things agree? If there be nothing of the exercise of a holy disposition in what is *commanded* of God, in what is *right*, and in what is an exercise of *obedience:* by what rule are we to judge of what is holy, and what is not? I scarcely can conceive of a truth more self-evident than this: That God's commands extend only to that which *comes under the influence of the will.* Knowledge can be no further a duty, nor ignorance a sin, than as each is influenced by the moral state of the heart; and the same is true of faith and unbelief. We might as well make the passive admission of light into the eye, or of sound into the ear, duties, as a passive admission of truth into the mind. To receive it into the *heart*, indeed, is duty; for this is a *voluntary* acquiescence in it: but that in which the will has no concern, cannot possibly be so.

Mr. M'L. sometimes writes as if he would acknowledge faith to be not only a duty, but to "contain virtue," or true *holiness;* seeing, as he observes, "it is the root of all Christian virtues, and that which gives glory to God, and without which it is impossible to please him." Nay, the reader would imagine, by his manner of writing, that he was pleading for the holy nature of faith, and that I had denied it; seeing I am represented as having made the "too bold" and "unfounded assertion," that *mere belief contains no virtue.* The truth is, I affirmed no such thing, but was pleading for the contrary; as is manifest from what Mr. M'L. says in the same note: "But why so solicitous to find virtue, or moral excellence, in faith?" It is true, I contended, that *if* the belief of the gospel were a mere exercise of the understanding, uninfluenced by the moral state of the heart, it could contain no virtue, nor be the object of a divine command: but I supposed it to be a persuasion of divine truth, *arising from the state of the heart*, in the same sense as unbelief, which Mr. M'L. justly calls "its opposite," is not a mere mistake of the judgment, but a persuasion arising from aversion to the truth. From the above, however, it would seem, that we are agreed in making faith in Christ something which comprehends "true virtue," or, which is the same thing, true holiness. Yet Mr. M'L. will not abide by all or any of this: if he would, indeed, there would be an end of the dispute. But he proceeds to reason in favour of that very "unfounded assertion," for making

which, I am unwarrantably accused of having been "too bold." Thus he reasons in support of it:—"If mere belief contain no virtue, it would not follow that unbelief could contain no sin: for such an argument proceeds upon this principle, That if there be no virtue in a thing, there can be no sin in its opposite; but this does not hold true in innumerable instances. There is no positive virtue in abstaining from many crimes that might be mentioned; yet the commission of them, or even the neglect of the opposite duties, would be very sinful. There is no moral virtue in taking food, when hungry; but wilfully to starve one's self to death would be suicide: and, to come nearer the point, there is no moral virtue in believing the testimony of a friend, when I have every reason to do so; yet, in these circumstances, were I to discredit his word, he would feel the injury very sensibly. Now, supposing there was no more virtue contained in believing the witness of God, than in believing the witness of men, to which it is compared, it does not follow that there would be no sin in unbelief, which is to make God a liar. To deny that faith is the exercise of a virtuous temper of heart, is to refuse some praise to the creature: but to deny that unbelief is a sin, is to impeach the moral character of God. And why so solicitous to find virtue, or moral excellence, in faith?"

Now, whether this reasoning be just, or not, it must be allowed to prove that Mr. M'L. notwithstanding what he has said to the contrary, does *not* consider faith as containing any virtue. It is true, what he says is under a hypothetical form, and it may appear as if he were only allowing me my argument, for the sake of overturning it: but it is manifestly his own principle which he labours to establish, and not mine; the very principle on which, as he conceives, depends the freeness of justification. I cannot but express my surprise that so acute a writer should deal so largely in inconsistency.

Mr. M'L. cannot conceive of any end to be answered in finding moral excellence in faith, unless it be to give some "praise to the creature." He doubtless means, by this insinuation, to furnish an argument against it. As far as any thing which is spiritually good in us, and which is wrought by him who *worketh all our works in us*, is *praiseworthy;* so far the same may be granted of faith: and, as we should not

think of denying the one to contain moral excellence, for the sake of humbling the creature; neither is there any ground for doing so with respect to the other.

But there are other ends to be answered by maintaining the holy nature of faith; and such as Mr. M'L. himself will not deny to be of importance. First: It is of importance that faith be considered as a duty: for if this be denied, Christ is denied the honour due to his name. But it is impossible to maintain that faith is a *duty*, if it contain no holy exercise of the heart. This, I presume, has already been made to appear. God requires nothing of intelligent creatures but what is holy. Secondly: It is of importance that the faith which we inculcate be *genuine*, or *such as will carry us to heaven.* But, if it have no holiness in its nature, it is *dead*, and must be unproductive. Mr. M'L. considers true faith as the *root* of holiness: but, if it be so, it must be holy itself; for the nature of the fruit corresponds with that of the root. If the difference between a living and dead faith do not consist in this, that the one is of a holy nature, and the other not so, I should be glad to be informed wherein it does consist? and whether the nature of the one be the same as that of the other, the difference between them arising merely from circumstances? Thirdly: It is of importance that unbelief be allowed to be a sin; as it is that which, by Mr. M'L.'s acknowledgment, "impeaches the moral character of God." But, if there be no holiness in faith, there can be no sin in its opposite. It is true, Mr. M'L. denies the principle of this argument, and speaks of "innumerable instances" of things which have no virtue; and yet the opposite of them is sin. This, I am persuaded, is not true. Whatever is the *proper* opposite of sin is holiness. The instances which are given do not prove the contrary; as abstinence from various crimes, eating when we are hungry, and believing a human testimony. There may, indeed, be no holiness in these things, as they are performed by apostate creatures: but, if they were performed as God requires them to be, (which they should be, in order to their being the *proper opposites* to the sins referred to,) they would be holy exercises. God requires us to abstain from all sin, *from a regard to his name;* to *eat and drink, and do whatever we do*, even the giving credit to the

testimony of a friend, "when we have *reason* to do so," *to his glory*. These things, thus performed, would be exercises of holiness.

I am aware, that those who have opposed the doctrine of total depravity have argued, that, as being *without natural affection* is sin; so the being possessed of it must be virtue. To this it has been justly answered, that, though a being *without natural affection* argues the highest degree of depravity, (as nothing else could overcome the common principles of human nature,) yet it does not follow, that mere natural affection is virtuous: for, if so, virtue would be found in animals. This answer is just, and sufficient to repel the objection on the subject of human depravity: but it will not apply to the case in hand. The question there relates to a matter of *fact*, or what men actually are; but here, to a matter of *right*, or what they ought to be. Whatever is capable of being done by a moral agent, *with an eye to the glory of God*, ought to be so done: and if it be, it is holy; if not, whatever may be thought of it by men, it is sinful. Natural affection itself, if *subordinated to him*, would be sanctified, or rendered holy; and the same may be said of every natural inclination or action of life. It is thus that God should be served, even in our civil concerns; and *holiness to the Lord* written, as it were, upon the *bells of the horses*.

I have known several persons in England, who have agreed with Mr. M'L. as to faith belonging merely to the intellectual faculty, and the moral state of the heart having no influence upon it; but then they either denied, or have been very reluctant to admit, that it is duty. 'The mind,' say they, 'is *passive* in the belief of a proposition: we cannot believe as we will; but according to evidence. It may be our duty to *examine* that evidence; but, as to faith, it, being altogether involuntary, cannot be a *duty*.' And, if it be a mere passive reception of the truth, on which the state of the will has no influence, I do not perceive how this consequence can be denied. But then the same might be said of unbelief: 'If evidence do not appear to us, how can we believe?' It may be our sin not to examine: but, as to our not believing, it being altogether involuntary, cannot be a sin.' By this mode of reasoning, the sin of unbelief is explained away; and unbe-

lievers commonly avail themselves of it for that purpose. As both these consequences (I mean the denying of faith being a duty, and unbelief a sin) are allowed by Mr. M'L. to be utterly repugnant to the scriptures, it becomes him, if he will defend the premises, to show that they have no necessary connexion.

The above reasoning might hold good, for aught I know, *in things which do not interest the heart:* but to maintain it in things which do, especially in things of a *moral and practical nature*, is either to deny the existence of prejudice, or that it has any influence in hindering belief.

The author of *Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners*, though he pleads for faith, as including our *receiving* Christ, and *coming* to him, yet is decidedly averse from all holy disposition of the heart preceding it, not only as affording a warrant, but as any way necessary to the thing itself. And, as he unites with Mr. M'L. in considering the sinner as an enemy to God at the time of his being justified, he must, to be consistent, consider faith as having no holiness in its nature. His method of reasoning on the priority of repentance to believing, would seem to denote the same thing. He allows speculative repentance, or a *change of mind* which has "no holiness" in it, to be necessary to believing; giving this as the reason: "While a sinner is either stupidly inattentive to his immortal interests, or expecting justification by his own obedience, he will not come to Christ." It should seem, then, that *aversion of heart* from the gospel-plan, or a *desire* to be justified by one's own obedience, is no objection to coming to Christ; and that a sinner *will* come to him, notwithstanding this, provided he be right in speculation, and his conscience sufficiently alarmed. If so, there certainly can be nothing spiritual or holy in the act of coming. The respect which I feel both towards Mr. Booth and Mr. M'Lean, is not a little: but there needs no apology for opposing these sentiments. Truth ought to be dearer to us than the greatest or best of men.

Mr. M'L. writes as if he were at a loss to know my meaning. "By a *corresponding temper of heart*," he says, "cannot be meant some good disposition *previous* to faith; for as the question relates to faith itself, that would be foreign to the point." I have no scruple in saying, however, that I con-

sider it as *previous* to faith; and as to what is suggested of its irrelevancy, the same might be said of unbelief. Were I to say that unbelief includes the exercise of an evil temper of heart, and that herein consists the sin of it, I should say no more than is plainly intimated by the sacred writers; who describe unbelievers as *stumbling at the word*, BEING DISOBEDIENT.* Yet Mr. M'L. might answer, 'By an evil temper of heart you cannot mean any thing *previous* to unbelief; for as the question relates to unbelief itself, that would be foreign to the point. Neither can you mean, that it is the immediate and inseparable *effect* of unbelief; for that is fully granted: and it is not the effect, but the *nature*, or essence, of unbelief, that is the point in question. Your meaning, therefore, must be this: that unbelief, in its very *nature*, is a temper, or disposition, of heart disagreeing with the truth.' To this I should answer, 'I do *not* consider unbelief as an evil temper of heart, but as a persuasion *arising out of it, and partaking of it:*' and the same answer is applicable to the subject in hand.

I shall first offer evidence, that faith in Christ is a persuasion influenced by the moral state of the heart, and partaking of it; and then consider the principal objections advanced against it.

If what has been said already, on duty being confined to things in which the will has an influence, be just; the whole of the second part of the foregoing treatise may be considered as evidence in favour of the point now at issue; as whatever proves faith to be a duty, proves it to be a *holy* exercise of the soul towards Christ, arising from the heart being turned towards him.

In addition to this, the following particulars are submitted to the reader.

First: Faith is *a grace of the Holy Spirit.* It is ranked with hope and charity, which are spiritual, or holy exercises. Indeed, whatever the Holy Spirit, *as a sanctifier*, produces, must resemble his own nature. *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* As *the wisdom which is from above is pure*, and of a practical nature; so faith, which is from above, resembles its divine origin.

* 1 Pet. ii. 8.

Secondly: It is that in the exercise of which we *give glory to God.** If faith be what Mr. M'L. acknowledges it to be, a *duty*, and an exercise of *obedience*, its possessing such a tendency is easily conceived: but, if it be a *passive reception of the truth*, on which the moral state of the heart has no influence, how can such a property be ascribed to it? There is a way in which inanimate nature glorifies God, and he may get himself glory by the works of the most ungodly; but no ungodly man truly *gives* glory to him; neither does a godly man, but in the exercise of holiness.

Thirdly: Faith is represented as depending upon *choice*, or *the state of the heart* towards God: *Said I not unto thee, If thou* WOULDEST *believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? How* CAN *ye believe*, WHICH RECEIVE HONOUR ONE OF ANOTHER, *and* SEEK NOT THE HONOUR THAT COMETH FROM GOD ONLY?—*If thou* CANST *believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*† If faith be a mere passive reception of the truth into the understanding, on which the state of the will has no influence, what fair interpretation can be given to these passages? If a disposition to *seek the divine honour* be not necessary to believing, how is it that the want of it should render it impossible? And if believing had no dependence upon choice, or the state of the heart, how is it that our Saviour should suspend his healing of the child, upon the parents being *able* to exercise it? Did he suspend his mercy on the performance of a natural impossibility; or upon something on which the state of the heart had no influence?

Fourthly: Faith is frequently represented as *implying repentance for sin*, which is acknowledged, on all hands, to be a holy exercise. It does not come up to the scripture-representation to say, repentance is a fruit of faith. There is no doubt, but that faith, where it exists, will operate to promote repentance, and every other holy exercise. It is true also, that a conviction of the being and attributes of God must, in the order of nature, precede repentance; because we cannot repent for offending a being of whose existence we doubt, or of whose character we have no just conception: but *the faith of the gospel*, or a believing in Jesus for the salvation of

* Rom. iv. 20. † John xi. 40. v. 44. Mark ix. 23.

our souls, is represented, in the New Testament, as *implying repentance* for sin. *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.—And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not,* THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE.—*If, peradventure, God will give them repentance* TO THE ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH.* Whenever the scriptures speak of repentance as followed by the remission of sins, it will be allowed that faith is supposed: for repentance without faith could not please God, nor have any connexion with the promise of forgiveness: and it is equally evident that, when they speak of faith as followed by justification, repentance is supposed; for faith without repentance would not be genuine. It is impossible to discern the glory of Christ's mediation, or to believe in the necessity, the importance, the loveliness, or the suitableness of his undertaking, while we *feel* not for the dishonour done to God by the sin of creatures, and particularly by our own sin. Ignorance, therefore, is ascribed to *obduracy*, or *insensibility* of heart.† Indeed, it is easy to perceive, that, where there is no sense of the evil and demerit of sin, there can be no *form nor comeliness* discerned in the Saviour, *nor beauty that we should desire him:* and, while this is the case, the servants of Christ will have to lament, *Who hath believed our report?*‡

Fifthly: Faith is often expressed by terms which indicate the exercise of *affection.* It is called *receiving* Christ, which stands opposed to *rejecting* him, or *receiving him not;* and which is descriptive of the treatment he met with from the body of the Jewish nation. It is called *receiving the love of the truth, that we may be saved;* and by salvation being thus connected with it, it is implied, that no other reception of the truth is saving. Christ's word is said to have *no place* in unbelievers; which implies that in true believers it *has place*, and which is expressive of more than a mere assent of the understanding. The good ground in the parable is said to represent them *who, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* It is here intimated, that no one receives the word to purpose, but in the exercise of an *honest and good heart.*§

* Mark i. 15. Matt. xxi. 32. 2 Tim. ii. 25.
† Ephes. iv. 18. ‡ Isa. liii. 1, 2.
§ John i. 12. 2 Thes. ii. 10. John viii. 37. Luke viii. 15.

Sixthly: Belief is expressly said to be *with the heart*. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe* IN THINE HEART *that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For* WITH THE HEART *man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—If thou believeth* WITH ALL THINE HEART, *thou mayest.** It is allowed, that the *heart*, in these passages, does not denote the affections to the exclusion of the understanding; nor does the argument require that it should: but neither does it denote the understanding to the exclusion of the affections, (which is required by the argument on the other side,) but the *inmost soul*, in opposition to the mouth with which confession is made unto salvation. Doing any thing *with the heart*, or *with all the heart*, are modes of speaking never used in scripture, I believe, for the mere purpose of expressing what is internal, or mental, and which may pertain only to the understanding: they rather denote the quality of *unfeignedness*, a quality repeatedly ascribed to faith,† and which marks an *honesty of heart* which is essential to it.

Seventhly: The want of faith is ascribed to MORAL CAUSES, *or to* THE WANT OF A RIGHT DISPOSITION OF HEART. *Ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye* WILL NOT *come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the* LOVE OF GOD *in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye* RECEIVE ME NOT: *if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?—Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.—If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God.*‡ If a holy disposition were unnecessary to believing in Christ, neither the want of it, nor the existence of the contrary, could form any obstruction to it.

Lastly: *Unbelief is not a mere errour of the understanding,*

* Rom. x. 9, 10. Acts viii. 37. † 1 Tim. i. 5. 2 Tim. i. 5.
‡ John v. 38—44. viii. 45—47.

but a positive and practical rejection of the gospel. It is actually treating God as a liar, and all the blessings of the gospel with contempt: but faith is the opposite of unbelief; therefore, it is not a mere assent of the understanding, but a positive and practical reception of the gospel, actually treating God as the God of truth, and the blessings of the gospel as worthy of all acceptation. This statement of things is clearly taught us by the pointed address of our Lord to the Jews, quoted under the foregoing argument. *Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.—If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* If faith were a mere exercise of the understanding, why do not men as readily believe the truth, as they believe a lie? Surely truth is not less evident to the mind, nor less consistent, than falsehood. It is evident, that their not believing the truth was owing to the aversion of their hearts, and nothing else; and, by what follows, it is equally evident, that the belief of the truth is owing to the removal of this aversion, or to the heart's being brought to be on the side of God: *He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God.*

I proceed to the consideration of *objections*. The first, and principal objection that Mr. M'L. alleges against this statement of things, is, that it *affects the doctrine of justification by grace alone, without the works of the law.* "The scriptures pointedly declare," he says, "that God justifies sinners FREELY BY HIS GRACE, *through the* REDEMPTION *that is in Jesus Christ*, and that this justification is received *through* FAITH in Christ's *blood*. Faith, in this case, is always distinguished from, and opposed to, the works of the law; not merely of the ceremonial law, which was peculiar to the Jews, but of that law by which is the knowledge of sin; which says, *Thou shalt not covet*, and which requires not only outward *good actions*, *but love*, and every good disposition of the heart, both towards God and our neighbour; so that the *works* of this law respect the heart, as well as life. The distinction, therefore, between *faith* and *works*, on this subject, is not that which is between *inward* and *outward* conformity to the law; for, if faith be not, in this case, distinguished from, and opposed to, our conformity to the law, both outwardly and inwardly, it cannot be said that we are *justified by faith without the deeds*

of the law, or that God *justifieth the ungodly*. Faith, indeed, as a principle of action, *worketh by love;* but it is not *as thus working* that it is imputed for righteousness; for it is expressly declared, that righteousness is imputed to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the UNGODLY. *It is of* FAITH, *that it might be by* GRACE; and grace and works are represented as incompatible with each other: for to him that WORKETH, is the reward not reckoned of GRACE, but of DEBT. Now, when men include in the very nature of justifying faith such good dispositions, holy affections, and pious exercises of heart, as the moral law requires, and so make them necessary (no matter under what consideration) to a sinner's acceptance with God, it perverts the apostle's doctrine upon this important subject, and makes justification to be at least, *as it were*, by the works of the law."*

There is no dispute whether justification be of *grace*, *through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ;* nor whether justification by faith be opposed to justification by the works of the law; even those works which are internal, as well as those which are external. But it is apprehended, that, in order to maintain these doctrines, there is no necessity to explain away the holy nature of faith, or to maintain that it consists in mere speculation, which it must, if it have nothing of the disposition of the heart in it.

If considering faith as arising from the disposition of the heart be unfriendly to justification by grace, without the works of the law, it must be on one or other of these suppositions: First: Either, that, should there be any holiness in us antecedent to justification, it must be imputed unto us for righteousness. Or, Secondly: If it be not so in fact, yet it will be so in the view of awakened sinners.

The first of these suppositions, so far from being friendly to the doctrine of justification by grace, utterly subverts the grand principle on which the necessity of it is founded. The grand principle on which the apostle rests the doctrine, is this: *It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not* IN ALL THINGS *written in the book of the law to do them.*† This declaration goes to an utter denial of the possibility of a sin-

* *On the Commission*, pp. 83, 84. † Gal. iii. 10.

ner's being justified by the works of his hands. But, if the foregoing supposition be true, the declaration must be false: for, according to this, the holiness of one that has *not* continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them, provided he have any, is admissible to his justification. On the other hand, if the declaration be true, the supposition is false: for, according to the apostle's doctrine, it must follow, that, whatever holiness any creature may possess, before, in, or after his believing, unless he could produce a righteousness in conforming *in all things* to God's righteous law, it will avail him nothing in respect of justification. I have no idea of any holiness antecedent to justification, any farther than what is necessarily implied in the nature of justifying faith; but, if it were otherwise, and a sinner could produce a series of holy actions, performed in a course of years, all must be reckoned as loss and dung in respect of his being accepted of God. He that would win Christ, must be *found in him.*

If antecedent holiness destroy the freeness of grace, I know of no solid reason why *consequent* holiness should not operate in the same way: and then, in order to be justified by grace, it will be necessary to continue the enemies of God through life. It is not the priority of *time* that makes any difference, but that of *causation.* Holiness may precede justification, as to time, and it may be necessary, on some account, that it should precede it, and yet have no causal influence on it. The self-abasement of the publican preceded his going down to his house *justified;* yet it was not *on this ground* that his justification rested. Holiness, on the other hand, may follow justification, as to time; and yet, for any thing that this will prove, may be that which is accounted for righteousness. The righteousness of Christ was imputed to Old-testament believers, long before it was actually wrought: and good was promised to Abraham, on the ground that God *knew him, that he would command his children, and his household after him.**

It was the denial of personal holiness being necessary to justification, as a *procuring cause*, and not any thing which regarded the *time* of it, that excited those *objections* against

* Gen. xviii. 18, 19.

the doctrine, as leading to licentiousness, which are repelled in the Epistle to the Romans, and which have been pleaded in this controversy. The doctrine here defended is liable to the same; not *justly*, indeed; neither was that of the Apostle: but so long as we maintain that acceptance with God is wholly out of regard to the righteousness of another, and not for any thing done by us, before, in, or after believing; a self-righteous spirit will be offended, and reproach the doctrine, as immoral.

The argument for the necessity of a sinner's being an enemy to God at the *time* of his justification, in order to its being wholly of grace, resembles that of some divines, who, for the same purpose, have pleaded for our being justified from *eternity*. They seem to have supposed, that, if God justified us before we had any existence, or could have performed any good works, it must be on the footing of *grace*. Yet these divines maintained that some men were ordained to condemnation from eternity; and that as a punishment for their sin, which God foresaw. But, if an eternal decree of condemnation might rest upon foreseen evil, who does not perceive, that an eternal decree of justification might equally rest upon foreseen good? The truth is, the freeness of justification does not depend upon the date of it.

Mr. M'Lean charges the sentiment he opposes, as a *perversion* of the Apostle's doctrine; and with making justification to be, at least, "*as it were*, by the works of the law." Yet he is fully aware, that, whatever is pleaded in behalf of the holy nature of faith, it is not supposed to justify us *as a work*, or *holy exercise*, or as being any part of that which is accounted unto us for righteousness: but merely as that which *unites to Christ*, for the sake of whose righteousness alone we are accepted. I have no idea of merit, either of condignity or congruity, or of justification being bestowed as a *reward* to believing, any more than he has. But I shall be told, that this is "a caution which intimates an apprehension that my idea of faith is very liable to such a misconstruction."* And was the Apostle's doctrine liable to no misconstruction? and did he use no caution to guard against it? Is Mr. M'L.'s

* *On the Commission*, p. 76.

doctrine liable to none? and does he never use caution for the same purpose? What else does he mean, when, discoursing on God's justifying the ungodly, he adds, "Faith, indeed, as a principle of action, *worketh by love;* but it is not *as thus working* that it is imputed for righteousness?"* I confess I am not able to discern the difference between this distinction and that which he discards; for, if there be any meaning in words, either in the Apostle's or his, faith *does* work by love; and that, from its first existence: and its thus working belongs to it, as genuine, justifying faith: but, though it always possessed this property, and without it could not have been genuine: yet it is not *on this account*, or in a way of reward, that we are said to be justified by it.

If he allege, that the property of *working by love* does not belong to the nature of faith, as justifying; and that, in the order of time, we are justified by it previously to its thus working, he must contradict the Apostle, who speaks of *receiving the love of the truth*, THAT WE MAY BE SAVED, and pronounces those persons *unbelievers*, who do not thus receive it.† His own words also will, in this case, be ill adapted to express his ideas. Instead of saying, "Faith, indeed, worketh by love; but it is not *as thus working*, that it justifies;" he ought to have said to this effect: Faith, indeed, worketh by love; but it is not till it has first performed its office in respect to justification, which it does previously to its working at all.

The scriptures constantly represent *union with Christ* as the foundation of our interest in the blessing of justification: *Of him are ye* IN *Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—righteousness—That I may be found* IN *him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.—We are accepted* IN *the Beloved. There is—no condemnation to them that are* IN *Christ Jesus.*‡ Now, faith in him being that by which this union is effected, hence arises the necessity of it in order to justification. It is that by which, as in a marriage, we are joined to the Lord, and so, by his gracious constitution of things, are interested in

* *On the Commission*, p. 84. † 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil. iii. 9. Ephes. i. 6. Rom. viii. 1. Gal. v. 6.

all he is, and all he possesses. And thus it is supposed, that living faith, or faith that *worketh by love*, is necessary to justification; not as being the ground of our acceptance with God; not as a virtue of which justification is the reward; but as that without which we could not be united to a living Redeemer.

But we are told, "If any thing holy in us be rendered necessary to our being accepted of God, (no matter under what consideration,) we pervert the Apostle's doctrine, and make justification to be at least, *as it were*, by the works of the law." Is Mr. M'L. sure that he does not pervert, or at least, sadly misapply the Apostle's words? Whatever be the meaning of the phrase *as it were*, it does not describe the principles of those who renounce all dependence upon their own holiness, and plead for the holy nature of faith, only as being necessary to render it genuine, and, consequently, to unite us to a holy Saviour. The characters there referred to were ungodly men, who relied upon their own works for justification, *stumbling at that stumbling-stone.*

That we may judge whether this assertion be well founded, it is necessary to examine the evidence on which it rests: and this, if I mistake not, is confined to the phraseology of a single passage of scripture. If this passage (Rom. iv. 4, 5.) do not prove the point for which it is alleged, I know of no other that does: and, what is more, the whole tenor of scripture teaches a doctrine directly opposite; that is to say, that REPENTANCE PRECEDES FORGIVENESS. But, waiving this, we will attend to the passage itself. If by *him that worketh not*, and the *ungodly* whom God justifieth, be meant persons who, at the time, had *never done any good thing* in the sight of God, and who were actually under the dominion of *enmity* against him, Mr. M'L.'s assertion will be granted him: but, if these terms be meant to describe persons who work not *with respect to justification;* and who, in their dealings with God for acceptance, come not as righteous, but as *ungodly;* no such consequence will follow. On the contrary, it will follow, that, if the Apostle's doctrine be perverted, it is Mr. M'L. that has perverted it.

That the Apostle is speaking of *believers*, we are expressly told in the passage itself. He that *worketh not* is said, at the

same time, to *believe:* but, whenever this can be said of a man, it cannot, with truth, be affirmed of him, that he has done nothing good in the sight of God, or that he is under the dominion of enmity against him. By Mr. M'L.'s own account, he has, by the influence of divine grace, done "what is *right*, in giving credit to what God says;" he has "obeyed the gospel;" he has complied with "the *command* of God," that we should believe in him whom he hath sent. It may, however, be truly affirmed of him, that he *worketh not with respect to justification;* for it is of the nature of faith to overlook and relinquish every thing of the kind. Whatever necessity there may be for a writer in vindication of the truth to enumerate these things, they are such as the subject of them thinks nothing of at the time; especially as the ground of his acceptance with God. All his hopes of mercy are those of a *sinner*, an *ungodly* sinner.

Him that worketh not stands opposed, by the apostle, to *him that worketh; to whom*, he says, *the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt.* (Rom. v. 4.) And is this a description of actually working for God? The character referred to is either *real* or *supposed:* either that of a self-righteous sinner, who would, at last, be dealt with on the footing of that covenant to which he adhered; or of a perfect conformist to the divine law. If it be the former, *he that worketh* undoubtedly means, not one that *actually labours for God*, but one that *worketh with a view to justification:* and, consequently, *he that worketh not* must mean, not one that has actually wrought nothing for God, but one that worketh not *with a view of being justified by it.* Or if, on the other hand, the character be allowed to be only a *supposed* one; namely, a perfect conformist to the divine law; yet, as what is done by him that so worketh is done *with a view to justification*, it is, on this account, properly opposed to the life of a believer; who, whatever he may do, does nothing without *an end*, but derives all his hopes of acceptance with God from the righteousness of another.

To this may be added the *examples* which the apostle refers to for the illustration of his doctrine. These are Abraham and David: and let the reader judge whether they be not decisive of the question. It is of Abraham's justification that he is speaking. He it is that is held up as a pattern of

justification by faith, in opposition to the works of the law. Of him it was supposed, *that he worked not, but believed on him that justifieth the ungodly.* If Abraham, therefore, at the time when he is said to have *believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness*, had never done any good thing, and was actually the enemy of God, Mr. M'L.'s position is established. But if the contrary be true, it is overturned. To determine this, the reader has only to consult Gen. xv. 6. xii. 1. and Heb. xi. 8. He will there perceive, that it was several years after his departure from Haran, (at which time the apostle bears witness to his being a believer,) that he is said to have *believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.* From hence, it is manifest, that the character described by the apostle is not that of an enemy, but a friend of God; and that it is not merely applicable to a Christian at the first moment of his believing, but through the whole of life. We have to deal with Christ for pardon and justification more than once; and must always go to him as *working not, but believing on him that justifieth the ungodly.*

Nor is the example of David less decisive than that of Abraham. When the *blessedness* of which the apostle speaks *came upon him*, he was not in a state of *enmity* to God: but had been his friend and servant for a series of years. The thirty-second appears, evidently, to be one of his penitential Psalms, composed after his fall in the case of Uriah. Yet he also is supposed to have *worked not, but believed on him that justifieth the ungodly.* And it is worthy of notice, that the very principle inculcated through this whole Psalm is, *the necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness;* a principle which requires to be disowned, before the position maintained by Mr. M'L. can be admitted.

It has been said, that the term *ungodly* is not used, but to describe the party as being under *actual enmity* to God at the time. I apprehend this is a mistake. Christ is said to have died for the *ungodly.* Did he then lay down his life only for those who, *at the time*, were actually his enemies? If so, he did not die for any of the Old-testament saints; nor for any of the godly who were then alive; not even for his own apostles. All that can in truth be said is, that, whatever were their

characters at the time, he died for them *as* ungodly; and thus it is that he *justifieth the ungodly*. Gospel-justification stands opposed to that which is in ordinary use: the one acquits the righteous, the worthy, the deserving; the other, the unrighteous, the unworthy, the *ungodly*.

But let us examine the other branch of Mr. M'L.'s objection; namely, the *effect* which such a doctrine must have on the mind of an awakened sinner. "This," he says, "is obvious. He who conceives that, in order to his pardon and acceptance with God, he must be first possessed of such good dispositions and holy affections as are commonly included in the nature of faith, will find no immediate relief from the gospel, nor any thing in it which fully reaches his case, while he views himself merely as a guilty sinner. Instead of believing on him that justifieth the ungodly, he believes, on the contrary, that he cannot be justified till he sustains an opposite character. Though Christ died for *sinners*—for the *ungodly*; yet he does not believe that Christ's death will be of any benefit to him as a mere sinner, but as possessed of holy dispositions; nor does he expect relief to his conscience purely and directly from the atonement, but through the medium of a better opinion of his own heart or character. This sentiment, if he is really concerned about his soul, must set him upon attempts to reform his heart, and to do something under the notion of acting faith that he may be justified; and all his endeavours, prayers, and religious exercises, will be directed to that end."

By the manner in which Mr. M'L. speaks of "pardon and acceptance with God," uniting them together, and denying all holy affection to be necessary to either, it is manifest that he denies the necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness; a doctrine taught not only in the thirty-second Psalm, from which the apostle argued the doctrine of *free* justification, but also in the whole tenor of scripture.*

Secondly: By rejecting this doctrine, he finds in the gospel "relief for the mere sinner." This "mere sinner" is

* 1 Kings viii. 29—50. Prov. xxviii. 13. Isa. lv. 6—8. Matt. iii. 2. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. Acts v. 31. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts ii. 38. iii. 19. xxvi. 18.

described as "awakened," and as "*viewing himself* merely as a guilty sinner." At the same time, however, he is supposed to be destitute of all "holy affection." It may be questioned whether this account of things be consistent with itself; or, whether any "mere sinner" ever "views himself merely as a guilty sinner;" for such views include a just *sense* of the evil of sin, and of his own utter unworthiness of the divine favour, which no "*mere* sinner" ever possessed. But, passing this, whatever be his "awakenings," and whatever the load of "guilt" that lies upon his conscience, seeing he is allowed to be destitute of all "holy affection," he must be, in fact, no other than *a hard-hearted enemy to true religion*. He has not a grain of regard to God's name, nor concern for having offended him; nor the least degree of attachment to the atonement of Christ, on account of its securing *his* honour; in a word, his whole affection centres in himself. This character wants "relief." And what is it that will relieve him? Pardon and acceptance with God, *through the atonement of Jesus?* If so, he needs neither to climb to heaven, nor to descend into the deep: the word is nigh him. But *this* is not what he wants: for he sees *no form nor comeliness in* HIM: *nor beauty that he should* DESIRE HIM. Is it to be *saved from his sins?* No: It is to be saved *in* them. It is to obtain ease to his troubled conscience, and exemption from the dread of divine wrath, without relinquishing his self-righteous lusts, and *submitting* to the righteousness of God. And is it true that such a character stands in need of "relief?" He may think he does, and may labour hard to obtain it: but surely he needs to be *wounded*, instead of healed, and *killed*, rather than made alive. Nay, in such a state of mind, is it *possible* that he should be "relieved" by the *gospel as it is in Jesus!* Rather, is it not self-evident, that, to relieve him we must assimilate our doctrine to his inclinations? It were as absurd to suppose that a *hard-hearted* sinner should be relieved by the true gospel, as that the *whole* should find relief in a physician.

Thirdly: The *hard-hearted* sinner is not only to be "relieved" by the assurance of "pardon and acceptance with God;" but this is supposed to be derived "*directly* from the atonement." If by this were meant *merely for the sake* of the atonement, it were unobjectionable: but the meaning is,

that the mere sinner is pardoned *without repentance*, or any "*holy affection to Christ.*" There must be no consciousness of any thing of the kind previously to forgiveness: for then it would not be "direct, but through the medium of a good opinion of his own heart or character." And does Mr. M'L. really believe in all this? What, then, will he make of the concurrent language of the Old and New Testament? *Let the wicked* FORSAKE HIS WAY, *and the unrighteous man his* THOUGHTS: *and let him* RETURN UNTO THE LORD, *and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Preaching the baptism of* REPENTANCE FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.—REPENT *ye, therefore, and be* CONVERTED, *that your* SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT.—*To turn them from the* POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD *that they may receive* FORGIVENESS OF SINS.* What can be made of this language? Shall we say, It is the voice of the *law*, directing a sinner what he must do *in order to be accepted by his own obedience?*† An ingenious mind will seldom be at a loss for something to say; but let us take heed lest we be found perverting the scriptures in support of an hypothesis. If there be any meaning in language, it is manifest, that these exhortations are addressed to sinners, as the means, not of legal, but of evangelical justification, justification of which *the forgiveness of sins* is an essential branch.

From the foregoing, and many such passages, it is evident, that when we are said to be justified by faith, it is such a faith as involves repentance; equally so as, when we are said to be forgiven on repentance, it is such repentance as involves believing.

Nay, more: If Mr. M'L. believe as above, what can be made of his own writings? How are we to understand his note, in page 92, containing a brief but judicious answer to Mr. John Barclay? He there proves, that no man is pardoned or accepted of God till he sustain a different character from that which belongs to him *merely as a sinner;* that is, till he is a *believer;* and that "the assurance of a man's own justification is *not* founded merely upon the *direct* testimony

* Isa. lv. 6—8. Luke iii. 3. Acts iii. 19. xxvi. 18.

† See Mr. M'L.'s *Simple Truth*, pp. 21—26.

of God, but also upon the testimony of his own conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Spirit that he believes the gospel testimony." Mr. Barclay might reply to him as he does to others. He might say, concerning the awakened sinner, that, on Mr. M'L.'s principles, 'Though Christ died for *sinners*, for the *ungodly;* yet he does not believe that Christ's death will be of any benefit to him as *a mere sinner*, but as possessed of *faith;* nor does he expect any satisfaction as to the salvation of his soul purely and *directly* from the atonement; but through the medium of a better opinion of himself, a consciousness that he is a believer. This sentiment, if he is really concerned about the salvation of his soul, must set him upon attempts that he may obtain this faith, in order to be justified; and all his endeavours, prayers, and religious exercises will be directed to that end.' If Mr. M'L. can answer this objection, he will answer his own.

After all, there is a way of deriving relief as "mere sinners, directly from the atonement:" but this is what *a mere sinner*, in Mr. M'L.'s sense of the terms, never does. They are believing sinners only; sinners possessed of "holy affection" to Christ, who are thus rendered dead to every thing in themselves, and alive to him. By Mr. M'L.'s reasoning, it should seem as though impenitent and unhumbled sinners not only derived their comfort in this way; but as if they were the only persons that did so! To derive relief as mere sinners directly from the atonement, it is not necessary that we should *possess* no holy affection towards Christ; but, that whatever we possess, we make *nothing* of it as a ground of acceptance, *counting* all things but loss and dung, that we may *win* and *be found in him.* And this manner of deriving relief is not peculiar to the time of our first believing; but belongs to a *life of faith on the Son of God.*

Again: It is supposed, that the including of holy affection in the nature of faith, and rendering it necessary to acceptance with God, (no matter under what consideration,) must, of necessity, lead the sinner from Christ, to rely on something good in himself. It is true, that, if any holiness in us were required *as a ground of acceptance with God*, it would be so; and the same would be true of the requirement of a faith without holiness, provided it were required *to this end.* That faith,

whatever be its nature, is required, and is necessary to precede justification, Mr. M'L. will not deny. He denies its being necessary as *that on account of which* we are justified: and so do I: but, whatever be the place which it occupies, it is allowed to be necessary. Now, if the necessity of a holy faith be more favourable to self-righteousness, than of one which has nothing holy in it, it must be either because it is of the *nature* of holiness, rather than of unholiness, so to operate; or because the depravity of the heart can find an *occasion* for glorying in the one case, which it cannot in the other. To suppose the first, is the same as supposing that it is of the nature of holy affection to Christ, to reject his salvation; of godly sorrow for sin, to render us more attached to it; and of humility of heart, to lift us up with pride. With respect to the last, I cannot answer for it, that the proud spirit of a merely "awakened sinner" shall not make a righteousness of a supposed holy faith; nor can Mr. M'L. answer for it, that he shall not do the same of his "simple belief." Whether faith have any holiness in it, or not, seeing he is taught to consider it as necessary to justification, and told that God makes so great account of it, that without it the atonement itself will avail him nothing; there is no wonder if his unhumbled heart should take up its rest in his supposed believing, instead of looking to the doctrine of the cross. An unrenewed sinner will make a righteousness of any thing, rather than submit to the righteousness of God. But this I can answer for, If he really have repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, his mind will not be employed in self-admiration. And this, I am persuaded, is more than Mr. M'L. can say respecting a faith, in the nature of which there is nothing holy; for if faith have no holiness in its nature, the sinner must and will, in the very exercise of it, admire himself. It is only in the exercise of a holy disposition of heart that the attention is turned another way: if this, therefore, be absent, there is nothing to counteract a self-righteous spirit; and if, at the same time, the sinner be flattered with having gained more clear and evangelical views of faith than the generality of professing Christians, there is every thing to feed it. To make the requirement of a speculative assent of the judgment, in which there is no holiness, necessary to the destruction of

self-righteousness, is supposing that this spirit cannot exist, unless it have true *holiness* to feed upon: but every one knows, that, in "mere sinners," it reigns uncontrolled; and that, according to the degree in which true holiness exists, it is so far counteracted. It is natural that it should be so: for it is essential to this principle to sink us into our native nothingness, and to embrace the Saviour as all in all.

From these considerations, I conclude, that, instead of its being necessary for a sinner to be *in an ungodly state of mind*, in order to his believing in Christ, and being *justified as ungodly;* the direct contrary is true. To believe in Christ, as *justifying the ungodly*, is to forego all claim and expectation of favour on the ground of our own deservings; to feel that unto us belongs nothing but shame and confusion of face; and that the only hope which remains for us is in the free mercy of God through Jesus Christ: but this no man ever did, whose heart was still under the dominion of enmity; for the thing itself is a contradiction. Enmity necessarily blinds the mind, both to its own deformity, and to the glory of the Saviour. An enemy of God, therefore, and a self-righteous unbeliever, are one and the same character.

I cannot but express my surprise, that it should ever have entered into the heart of wise and good men to imagine, that a faith which implies contrition and self-annihilation in its very nature, (the spirit of the publican,) should be supposed to be favourable to self-righteousness; while that which may consist with a hard heart, a proud spirit, and perfect enmity to God, (the very temper of the pharisee,) is pleaded for, as necessary to root it up! Why, then, did not the pharisee go down to his house *justified*, rather than the publican? The one *had humbled himself:* for God to justify him, therefore, would, it seems, be inconsistent with the freeness of his grace. As to the other, assuredly he was not wanting in *ungodliness*, nor had he ever wrought a single *work* for God, notwithstanding all his boasting. He was "a mere sinner;" and, if Christ's death will prove a benefit to such, why was it not so to him? At least, he came very near to the character which, according to Mr. M'L.'s doctrine, God should justify. 'No:' it will be said, 'he did not *believe*.' It seems, then, that something more is necessary, after all, than being "a mere sinner."

Yet, why should it? Did not Christ "die for *sinners*, for the *ungodly?*" Why should he not, as "a mere sinner," become a partaker of his benefits? Or, if not, why does Mr. M'L. write as if he should? 'He did not *believe*.' . . . . True: nor, while he was under the dominion of such a spirit, *could he believe*. Ere he could come to Jesus, or believe in him, he must have *heard* and *learned* another lesson.*

It is farther objected, that, to suppose faith to include in it any holy disposition of heart, is *confounding it with its effects*, and making those to be *one*, which the scriptures declare to be *three;* namely, faith, hope, and charity. I do not know that the scriptures any where teach us that *all* holy disposition *is* the effect of faith. It is not more so, I apprehend, than *all* unholy disposition is the effect of unbelief: *but unbelief itself is the effect of unholy disposition*, as, I suppose, will be allowed: *all* unholy disposition, therefore, cannot be the effect of unbelief. Mr. M'L. has proved, that faith also is not only a principle of evangelical obedience, but is *itself an exercise of obedience: all* obedience, therefore, by his own account, is not the effect of faith; for nothing can be an effect of itself. And, unless it be possible to *obey* God without any holy disposition of heart to do so; it will equally follow, that *all holy disposition* cannot be the effect of faith. With respect to the confounding of what the scriptures distinguish, whatever distinction there is between faith, hope, and charity, it makes nothing to Mr. M'L.'s argument; unless they can be proved to be so distinct as that nothing of the one is to be found in the other. Faith must not only have no love in it, but no hope; hope must include neither faith nor love; and love must possess neither faith nor hope. But are they thus distinct? On the contrary, it may be found, upon strict inquiry, that there is not a grace of the Holy Spirit which does not possess a portion of every other grace. Yet faith is not love, nor hope, nor joy, nor long-suffering, nor gentleness, nor goodness, nor meekness, nor patience: each has a distinctive character; and yet each is so blended with the other, that, in dissecting one, you must cut through the veins of all.

* John v. 44. xii. 39, 40. vi. 45.

"Some affirm," says Mr. M'L. "that faith, hope, and love are three, considered only in respect of their objects."* I had, indeed, suggested that they are three, considered with respect to their objects, but never thought of affirming that they are three in that view *only*. They may be three in many other respects, for aught I know. My argument only required me to point out a sense in which they were distinct, provided they were not so in respect of their holy nature. I see no solidity in Mr. M'L.'s objection to an objective distinction; and it is rather extraordinary, that what he substitutes in its place, from Mr. Sandeman, is a distinction merely objective.

Mr. M'L. thinks that faith, hope, and love are distinct as to their *nature;* and that the *excellency* ascribed to love consists in its being holy; whereas faith is not so. But what becomes of *hope?* Love is not said to excel faith only: hope, therefore, is required to have no holiness in it, any more than faith. And has it none? Mr. M'L. when asked whether hope did not imply *desire*, and desire *love?* answered, "Yes: hope is a modification of love." It was replied, "Then you have given up your argument!"

It has been farther objected, that the reception of God's testimony is compared to the reception of human testimony; and, that as a disposition of heart, whether holy or unholy, is not necessary to the one, so neither is it to the other. It is allowed, that the testimony of man may, in many cases, be believed merely by the understanding, and without being at all influenced by the state of the heart: but it is only in cases with which THE HEART HAS NO CONCERN. If the admission of a human testimony respected things of which there was no sensible evidence; things, the belief of which would require a total relinquishment of a favourite system, and the pursuit of an opposite course of action; things, which the greater part of those about us disregarded; and which, if true, might be at a considerable distance; objections would arise against the admission of it, which, if it were otherwise, would have no existence. Nor could they be removed while the heart remained averse. The fact, it is true, might become so notorious as to silence opposition, and, in the end, extort conviction;

* *On the Commission*, p. 82. Note.

but conviction, thus extorted, would not be faith. Faith implies that we *think well* of the testifier, or possess a confidence in his veracity: but this may consist with both ill opinion and ill will. It is the persuasion of sense, rather than of faith. Such was that of some of the chief rulers, that Christ was the Messiah.* The miracles which he wrought silenced their opposition, and planted in their consciences a conviction that it must be so. It is true, this conviction is called *believing;* but it is only in an improper sense: it was not that faith which is connected with justification, or salvation. Whatever conviction any man may have of the truth, while it is against the grain of his heart, he is not a believer in the proper sense of the term; nor do the scriptures acknowledge him as such. It is only the *receiving the love of the truth* that will prove *saving:* and he that does not thus receive it, is described as an *unbeliever.*† If Micaiah's testimony of what God had revealed to him had been in favour of the expedition against Ramoth Gilead, Ahab could have believed it, for a little before this, he had believed a prophet who spake good concerning him.‡ Or, if it had been delivered by a person against whom he had no prejudice, and on a subject that neither favoured nor thwarted his inclinations, he might have believed it merely with his understanding, uninfluenced by any disposition of his heart: but as it was, while four hundred prophets were for him to one against him, and while sensible that appearances were in his favour, he believed it not, and even bade defiance to it. It is possible he might have some *misgivings,* even while he was ordering Micaiah to prison; and when the arrow pierced him, his *fears* would rise high. As death approached, he would *feel* the truth of what he had been told, and be possessed, it is likely, of tremendous *forebodings* of an hereafter: but all this was not faith, but *involuntary conviction;* a species of conviction this, which neither possesses nor produces any good; and which has not a promise made to it in the oracles of truth.

It is acknowledged, by the author of *A Dialogue between David and Jonathan,* that, "After all we can say of the speculative knowledge of practical truth, we must still remember

* John xii. 42, 43. † 2 Thes. ii. 10—12. ‡ 1 Kings xx. 13, 14.

that it implies some very essential imperfection and errour." But, if practical truth require something more than speculative knowledge to enter into it, why is not the same acknowledged of believing it? Can spiritual things require to be *spiritually discerned*, and yet be believed while the heart is wholly carnal?

Lastly: it is objected, that the word of God is represented as the mean of regeneration: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.—Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.** And, as it is supposed that the word must be *understood* and *believed*, before it can have any saving influence upon us; so it is concluded, that regeneration must rather be preceded by faith, than faith by regeneration; or, at least, that they are coeval. This objection has been advanced from several quarters, and for several purposes. In answer to it, I would, in the first place, offer two or three general remarks:

First: Whether regeneration influence faith, or faith regeneration; if either of them influence the other, they cannot be coeval. One must be prior to the other, at least in the order of nature; as the effect is ever preceded by the cause.

Secondly: Whatever weight this objection may possess, it ought not to be made by any one who denies *the belief of the gospel to be saving faith*. For, allowing the word, *understood* and *believed*, to be that by which we are regenerated, still, if this belief be not faith, but something merely presupposed by it, faith may, notwithstanding, be preceded by regeneration. If faith be the same thing as coming to Christ, receiving him, and relying upon him for acceptance with God, all this, in the order of things, follows upon believing the truth concerning him; no less so, than *coming to God follows a believing that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. We may, therefore, be regenerated by a perception and belief of the truth, and, as the immediate effect of it, come to Jesus and rely upon him for salvation.

Thirdly: It may be questioned, whether this objection ought to be made by those who admit the necessity of a spi-

* James i. 18. 1 Peter i. 23.

ritual discernment of the glory of divine things in order to believing. That this is a principle clearly established in the scriptures, cannot be denied. *Seeing* the Son is necessary to believing in him. Unbelief is attributed to spiritual blindness; and those who believed not the *report* of the gospel, are described as *seeing no form nor comeliness* in the Saviour, nor *beauty that they should desire him.**

Mr. M'L. speaking of the saving truth of the gospel, says, "It is no sooner *perceived* and *believed*, than it takes possession of the will and affections."† This, I should think, is allowing that *perception* is distinct from believing, and necessarily precedes it. But, if a spiritual perception of the glory of divine truth precede believing, this may be the same, in effect, as regeneration preceding it. Allowing that the word requires to be *perceived*, ere the will and affections can be changed, it does not follow that it must also be *believed*, for this purpose: for the very perception itself may *change us into the same image;* and, in virtue of it, we may instantly, with our whole heart, set to our seal that God is true.

Now, I apprehend, that all my opponents are included under one or other of these descriptions: and, if so, I might very well be excused from any farther answer. The word of God may be allowed to be the means of regeneration; and yet regeneration may precede believing.

I do not wish, however, to dismiss the subject without stating my views of it, and the grounds on which they rest. To me, it appears, that the scriptures trace a change of heart to an origin beyond either belief or perception, even to that divine influence which is the *cause* of both; an influence which, with great propriety, is compared to the power which at first *commanded the light to shine out of darkness.*‡

That there is a divine influence upon the soul, which is necessary to spiritual perception and belief, as being the cause of them, those with whom I am now reasoning will admit. The only question is, In what *order* these things are caused? Whether the Holy Spirit causes the mind, while carnal, to discern and believe spiritual things, and thereby renders it

* 2 Cor. iv. 4. Isa. liii. 1, 2. † *On the Commission*, p. 82.
‡ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

spiritual? or, whether he imparts a holy susceptibility and relish for the truth, in consequence of which we discern its glory, and embrace it? The latter appears, to me, to be the truth. The following are the principal grounds on which I embrace it:—

First: The scriptures represent the dominion of sin in the heart, as *utterly inconsistent* with a spiritual perception and belief of the gospel; and, so long as it continues, as rendering both the one and the other impossible. Spiritual blindness is ascribed to aversion of heart. *Their eyes have they closed.—They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.—The ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness, obduracy, or callousness of the heart.** The obstinacy and aversion of heart is the film to the mental eye, preventing all spiritual glory entering into it. The natural man, therefore, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, neither* CAN *he know them.* From hence, it will follow, that unless the Holy Spirit effect that which he has declared to be impossible, his influence must consist, not in causing the mind to see *notwithstanding* the obstruction, but in removing the obstruction itself out of the way. If it be said, Though it be impossible with men, yet it may be possible with God, I answer, Those things which are impossible with men, but possible with God, are not such as are impossible *in their own nature.* Where this is the case, the power of God is never introduced as accomplishing them, any more than the power of man. We should not, for instance, think of affirming, that the heart, while carnal, and in a state of *enmity against God*, can, by his almighty power, be made to love him, and be *subject to his law:* for this is, in itself, impossible. But the impossibility of the natural man receiving the things of the Spirit of God, while they appear *foolishness* to him, is manifestly of the same nature as this, and is described in the same language.† God does not cause the mind, while carnal, to be subject to his law, but imparts that which removes the obstruction; *taking away the stony heart out of our flesh, and giving us a heart*

* Acts xxviii. 27. Job xxi. 14. Ephes. iv. 18.

† Compare 1 Cor. ii. 14. with Rom. viii. 7.

of flesh. And thus it is supposed to be in respect of spiritual discernment: God does not cause the natural man to receive spiritual things, and thereby render him spiritual; but removes the obstructing film by imparting a spiritual relish for those things. Thus it is that *spiritual things are* SPIRITUALLY *discerned.*

Secondly: Though holiness is frequently ascribed, in the scriptures, to a spiritual perception of the truth, yet that spiritual perception itself, in the first instance, is ascribed to the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. The Lord OPENED THE HEART *of Lydia, and she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.*—*God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,* HATH SHINED IN OUR HEARTS, TO GIVE *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*—*The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the same* ANOINTING TEACHETH *you of all things.*—*Ye have an unction from the* HOLY ONE, *and ye know all things.**

Finally: Every thing which proves that spiritual blindness and unbelief have their origin in the depravity of the heart, proves that, whatever may be said of particular volitions being caused by ideas received into the mind, original biasses are not so:† and every thing which proves spiritual percep-

* Acts xvi. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 John ii. 27. 20.

† President Edwards, (than whom no man will be allowed to have possessed a clearer insight into these difficult subjects,) speaks with great caution on the will being determined by the understanding. He denies that it is so, if by the understanding be meant what is called *reason* or *judgment;* and only allows it "in a large sense, as including the whole faculties of perception or apprehension." And, even when taken in this large sense, he rather chooses to say, that "*The will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable, is,* than to say that the will is *determined* by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable; because an appearing most agreeable, or pleasing to the mind, and the mind's preferring and choosing, seems hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct."* Thus also he writes in his *Treatise on the Affections.* "Spiritual understanding consists, primarily, in *a sense* of heart of *spiritual beauty.* I say in *a sense of heart,* for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding: nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of

* Enquiry on the Will, pp. 11. 17. London Edition.

tion and faith to be holy exercises, proves that a change of heart must, of necessity, precede them; as no holy exercise can have place while the heart is under the dominion of carnality. And whether these principles have not been sufficiently proved in the foregoing pages, the reader must determine.

It is thus, I apprehend, that God *reveals* the truth to us by his Spirit, in order to our discerning and believing it: *Blessed art thou, Simon-Barjona: flesh and blood hath not* REVEALED *these things unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.—Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and* REVEALED *them unto babes.—Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*, (that is, into the heart of the worldly man,) *the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath* REVEALED *them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world*, BUT THE SPIRIT WHICH IS OF GOD, THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS THAT ARE FREELY GIVEN TO US OF GOD. *Which things also we* (as ministers) *speak, not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit*

understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it; and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the nature of it *the sense of the heart*; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination, and will."

"There is a distinction to be made between a mere *notional understanding*, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and *the sense of the heart*, wherein the mind does not only *speculate* and *behold*, but *relishes* and *feels*. That sort of knowledge, by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that, by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge; the other, sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned, the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul, as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of instruction in it; as he that hath perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt it."*

* Pages 227, 228. Fourth Edition.

teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED. This *revelation* from above communicates no new truths, but imparts a holy susceptibility of spirit, *a spirit which is of God*, (and which stands opposed to *the spirit of the world,*) by which those truths that were already revealed in the scriptures, but which were *hid* from us by our pride and hardness of heart, become manifest. Thus faith is the *gift* of God. Believing itself, I should think, cannot, with any propriety, be termed a gift; but he gives us that from which it immediately follows; namely, *an heart to know him, an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear.**

I see nothing inconsistent between this statement of things, and that of James and Peter. We are as properly said to be *born again by the word by God*, as we are said to be born into the world by means of our parents; yet as, in this case, the instrumentality of man was consistent with *the inspiration of him who quickeneth all things*, and who, by an immediate, though mysterious operation of his hand, *gave us life;* so I conceive it is in the other. The term *regeneration*, in the sacred writings, is not always used in that strict sense in which we use it in theological discussion. Like almost every other term, it is sometimes used in a more strict, and sometimes in a more general sense. Thus repentance is sometimes distinguished from faith: at other times, it comprehends the whole of that which is necessary to forgiveness, and must, therefore, comprehend believing. And thus regeneration is sometimes expressive of that operation in which the soul is passive; and, in this sense, stands distinguished from conversion, or actual turning to God by Jesus Christ. At other times, it includes not only the first impartation of spiritual life, but the whole of that change which denominates us Christians, or by which we are brought as into a new moral world. When the term is introduced as a *cause* of faith, or as that of which believing in Jesus is a proof, (as it is in John i. 12, 13. and 1 John v. 1.) we may be certain it stands distinguished from it: but when

* Jer. xxiv. 7. Deut. xxix 4

the same things are ascribed to it, which peculiarly pertain to faith, we may be equally certain that it includes it. Thus we read of *the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;* THAT BEING JUSTIFIED *by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** If regeneration did not here include faith in Jesus Christ, it would not, I conceive, stand connected, as it does, with *justification,* which is peculiarly ascribed to faith.

Regeneration, taken in this large sense of the term, is undoubtedly *by the word of God.* It is by means of this, that a sinner is first convinced of sin, and by this, as exhibiting mercy through Jesus Christ, is kept from despair. It is by this only that he can become acquainted with the character of the being he has offended, the nature and demerit of sin, and the way in which he must be saved from it. These important truths, viewed with the eye of an enlightened conscience, frequently produce great effects upon the soul, even previously to its yielding itself up to Christ. And the impartation of spiritual life, or a susceptibility of heart to receive the truth, may generally, if not always, *accompany* the representation of truth to the mind. It was while Paul was speaking, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia. It is also allowed, that when the word is received into the soul, and finds place there, it *worketh effectually*, and becomes a principle of holy action, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* All I contend for is, *That it is not by means of a spiritual perception, or belief of the gospel, that the heart is, for the first time, effectually influenced towards God;* for spiritual perception and belief, are represented as the *effects*, and not the *causes* of such influence.

A spiritual perception of the glory of divine things, appears to be the first sensation of which the mind is conscious; but it is not the first operation of God upon it. Spiritual perception is that which the scriptures call αἴσθησις, *judgment*, or *sense*, or *the judgment arising from holy sensibility.*† It is that in spiritual things, which a delicate sense of propriety is in natural things; in which the mind judges, as it were, in-

* Titus iii. 5—7. † Phil. i. 9.

stinctively, from a feeling of what is proper. It is by this *unction from the Holy One*, that we perceive the glory of the divine character, the evil of sin, and the lovely fitness of the Saviour; neither of which can be properly known by mere intellect, any more than the sweetness of honey, or the bitterness of wormwood, can be ascertained by the sight of the eye. Nor can one be perceived, but in connexion with the other. Without a sense of the glory of the object offended, it is impossible to have any just perception of the evil nature of the offence: and without a sense of the evil of the offence, it is equally impossible to discern either the necessity or the fitness of a Saviour: but, with such a sense of things, each naturally, and perhaps instantaneously, follows the other. Hence arise the exercises of *repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;* and in the order in which the scriptures represent them.

Much has been said of this statement of things, as involving the absurdity of a *godly unbeliever*. Scripture-declarations and promises, expressive of the safety of the regenerate, have been urged, and a conclusion drawn, that, if regeneration precede believing, men may be in a safe state without coming to Christ.* It will be allowed, I suppose, that spiritual perception necessarily precedes believing; or that *seeing the Son* goes before *believing in him;* also, that a belief of the doctrine of Christ precedes our coming to him for life, as much so as believing that God is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, precedes coming to him. But it were as easy to produce a number of declarations and promises which express the safety of those who *know* Christ, and believe his doctrine, as of those who are regenerate: and it might, with equal propriety, be said, There is but little, if any, occasion for those who *know* Christ, to believe in him; or for those who believe his doctrine, to come to him for eternal life, seeing they are already in a state of salvation. The truth appears to be, these things are inseparable; and when promises are made to one, it is as connected with the other. The priority contended for is rather in order of nature, than of time; or, if it be the latter, it may be owing to the disadvantages un-

* Mr. Booth's *Glad Tidings, &c.* pp. 176. 180.

der which the party may be placed, as to the means of understanding the gospel. No sooner is the heart turned towards Christ, than Christ is embraced. It is necessary that the evil humours of a jaundiced eye should be removed, before we can see things as they are: but no sooner are they removed, than we see. And if there be a priority in order of time, owing to the want of opportunity of knowing the truth; yet, where a person embraces Christ, so far as he has the means of knowing him, he is, in effect, a believer. The Bereans *received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so: therefore*, it is said, *many of them believed.* And had they died, while engaged in this noble pursuit, they would not have been treated as unbelievers. This principle, therefore, does not involve the absurdity of a *godly unbeliever.* But, if its opposite be true, the absurdity of an *ungodly believer* must, undoubtedly, be admitted. Indeed, those who plead for it avow this consequence: for, though they allow that none but believers are justified; yet they contend, that, at the time of justification, the party is absolutely, and in every sense, ungodly; that is, he is, at the same instant, both a believer and an enemy of God!

I shall conclude, with a reflection or two on the consequences of the principle I oppose, with respect to addressing the unconverted:

First: If the necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness be given up, we shall not be in the practice of urging it on the unconverted. We shall imagine it will be leading souls astray, to press it before, and in order to believing; and afterwards, it will be thought unnecessary; as all that is wanted will come of itself. Thus it will, in effect, be left out of our ministry; but whether, in this case, we can acquit ourselves of having deserted the examples, and, of course, the doctrine, of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, deserves our serious consideration.

Secondly: For the same reason that we give up the necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness, we may give up *all* exhortations to things spiritually good, as *means of salvation.*

Instead of uniting with the sacred writers in calling upon the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts, and to return to the Lord, that he may have mercy upon him; we shall consider it as tending to make them Pharisees. Indeed, Mr. M'L. seems prepared for this consequence. If I understand him, he does not approve of unconverted sinners being exhorted to *any thing spiritually good*, any otherwise than as holding up to them the language of the law, for convincing them of sin. It is thus he answers the question, "Are unbelievers to be exhorted to obedience to God's commandments?" referring us to the answer of our Lord to the young ruler, which directed him to keep the commandments, if he would enter into life.* It is easy to perceive that his scheme requires this construction of the exhortations of the Bible: for, if he allow that sinners are called to the exercise of any thing spiritually good, *in order to their partaking of spiritual blessings*, he must give up his favourite notion of God's justifying men while in a state of enmity against him. True it is, that all duty, in some sort, belongs to the law: considering it as the eternal standard of right and wrong, it requires the heart in every modification. Repentance, faith, and all holy exercises of the mind are, in this sense, required by it. But, as a covenant of life, it does not admit of repentance, and much less hold up the promise of forgiveness. When God says, *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin*, this is not the language of the law *as a covenant of life*. Mr. M'L. tells us, in the same page, that "There is no promise of life to the doing of any good thing, except *all* the commandments be kept." How then can the law, as a covenant of life, so much as admit of repentance, and much less hold up a hope that, in case of it, iniquity shall not be our ruin? The scriptures exhort on this wise: *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Labour not for the meat that*

* *Simple Truth*, p. 21. Second Edition.

perisheth; but for that which endureth unto everlasting life. —*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Is this the mere language of the law, and designed to suggest what they must do, if they would be justified by the works of it?

It should seem, that, if Mr. M'L. was called to visit a dying sinner, he would be careful not to use any such language as this; or, if he did, it must be ironically, teaching him what he must do, on his own self-justifying principles, to gain eternal life. If he be serious, he has only to state to him what Christ has done upon the cross, and assure him, that, if he believes it, he is happy. Far be it from me, that I should disapprove of an exhibition of the Saviour, as the only foundation of hope to a dying sinner, or plead for such directions as fall short of believing in him. In both these particulars, I am persuaded, Mr. M'L. is in the right; and that all those counsels to sinners, which are adapted only to turn their attention to the workings of their own hearts, to their prayers, or to their tears, and not to the blood of the cross, are delusive and dangerous. But does it follow, that they are to be exhorted to nothing spiritually good, unless it be for their conviction? Mr. M'L. to be consistent, must not seriously exhort a sinner to *come off* from those refuges of lies, to *renounce* all dependence on his prayers and tears, and to *rely upon Christ* alone, as necessary to justification, lest he make him a pharisee: for this would be the same thing as exhorting him to *humble himself*, and *submit himself to the righteousness of God;* exercises in which the mind is active, and which are spiritually good.

Why should we be wise above what is written? why scruple to address such a character in the language of inspiration: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The sacred writers *warn* and *exhort*, as well as *teach*. While they exhibit the Saviour, they expostulate, entreat, and persuade men to embrace him with all their hearts: and this, without any apparent apprehensions of undermining the doctrine of free justification.

If it be said, The exercises included in the foregoing exhortations *imply faith;* I grant it. Without faith in Christ, neither repentance, nor any other spiritual exercise, would be followed with forgiveness. Those who seek the Lord, must be exhorted to seek him in the way in which he is to be found; those that *call upon him*, must do so *in the name of Jesus;* the *way* and *thoughts* to be forsaken respect not merely a course of outward crimes, but the self-righteous schemes of the heart; and *returning to the Lord* is nothing less than returning home to God by Jesus Christ. But this does not prove that the exhortation, unless it be to teach them what they must do to be justified by a covenant of works, is improperly addressed to the unconverted. It is manifestly intended for no such purpose, but as a direction to obtain salvation.

The scriptures sometimes give directions as to the way of our obtaining the remission of sins, and acceptance with God; and sometimes of being saved in general, or of obtaining everlasting life; and we ought to give the same. If they direct us to seek for pardon, it is by repentance;* if for justification, it is by believing;† and if for eternal salvation, it is by a life of evangelical obedience ‡ When they speak of pardon, justification is supposed;§ and when they exhort to repentance in order to it, believing in the *name* of Jesus is supposed.‖ On the other hand, when they speak of justification, they include forgiveness;¶ and when they exhort to believing, in order to it, it is to such a believing as comprehends repentance.**

Many of these directions, on the principle I oppose, must be omitted; but, if they be, some of the most essential branches of the Christian ministry will be neglected.

* Isa. lv. 6, 7. Acts viii. 22. † Acts xiii. 39. Rom. iv. 4, 5. ix. 32. ‡ Rom. ii. 7. Heb. xi. 14. § Psa. xxxii. 1, 2. compared with Rom. iv. 6, 7. ‖ Luke xv. 4. 7. Acts xiii. 38. Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14. ¶ Rom. iv. 6, 7. ** Mark i. 15. Matt. xxi. 32. Acts xvi. 31. compared with xx. 21. Luke xiii. 3.

A

DEFENCE

OF A

TREATISE,

ENTITLED,

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION:

CONTAINING

A REPLY TO MR. BUTTON'S REMARKS,

AND THE

OBSERVATIONS OF PHILANTHROPOS.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. JESUS CHRIST.

By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. PAUL.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

1787.

THE prevalence of truth and righteousness is, doubtless, an object of great importance; nor is the former any less necessary to the latter, than both are to the interests of mankind. If controversy is of any use, it is because it tends to bring truth to light. It too often unhappily falls out, however, that the parties themselves are not the first who are convinced by each other's reasonings: but, on the contrary, are as far, and perhaps farther, asunder, when they leave off, than when they began: this is not very difficult to be accounted for, though it is much to be lamented. Perhaps there are very few controversies, wherein there is not room for mutual concessions. The backwardness so generally discovered to this by writers, and the determination that too commonly appears on both sides to maintain, at all events, their own principles, have given much disgust to many readers, and made them almost ready to despair of edification by reading controversy.

But, though it must be granted, that such conduct affords a just ground of disgust towards a writer, yet there is not the same reason for being disgusted with controversial writing. Whatever be the prejudices of the parties, and their rigid adherence to their own opinions; if a controversy is carried on with any good degree of judgment, truth is likely to come out between them; and what avails it on whose side it is found, if it is but found? The obstinacy of the writers is a sin; but it is a sin that belongs to themselves: the reader may get

good, notwithstanding this, sufficient to repay him for all his trouble.

For my own part, I never imagined myself infallible. I all along thought that, though, at the time, I could see no mistakes in the piece I had written; (if I had, I should certainly have corrected them;) yet, no doubt, other people, who would look at it with different eyes from mine, would discern some; and I trust it has been my desire to lie open to instruction from every quarter. It would be the shame and folly of any man, especially of one of my years, to act otherwise.

I will not pretend to be free from that spirit which easily besets a person engaged in controversy: but thus much I can say, I have *endeavoured* to read each of my opponents with a view to conviction; and it becomes me to acknowledge, that I have not been altogether disappointed. There are some passages, which, if I had the piece to write over again, I should expunge, and others which I should alter: I should endeavour, in some places, to be more explicit, and, in others, more upon my guard against every appearance of unkind reflection.* There are also some lesser matters, which I shall acknowledge in their place. Justice requires me to say thus much: but, as to the main sentiment endeavoured to be established, notwithstanding what has been written, I must say, it appears to me unshaken. If, in my judgment, *that* had been overthrown, the attention of the reader should not have been called upon by the present reply.

In the publications of both my opponents† I see different degrees of merit; and for each of their persons and charac-

* In a *second edition* of the publication to which Mr. F. refers, these alterations were made; from which corrected edition, the piece, as it appears in the present volume, is printed. ED.

† '*Both* your opponents—but why not reply to Dr. WITHERS?' Because his letter appears, to me, to contain nothing like an answer to that against which it is written. The utmost I can gather, that looks any thing like evidence, may be summed up in a very small compass. "There can be no duty," it is said, "without a voluntary compact. If a compact with God cannot be found on holy record—if it be evident that man is destitute of the powers essential to the existence of such a compact, it cannot be his duty to believe." (pp. 21. 26.) It might have been added, with equal propriety,—*nor to do any thing else which is enjoined him.* But, I would ask, to whom are we *unprofitable* servants, as

ters I feel a most sincere regard. I, doubtless, think them both beside the truth; and, I suppose, they may think the

doing no more than our DUTY? To men, with whom we make compacts, or to God? If Dr. W.'s reasoning be just, it is not the *duty* of children to be subject to their parents.

Again: Men are not all bound to have an equal "number of ideas, to believe without evidence, examination, or beyond their natural capacities." (pp. 40. 59. 73—76.) This is very true; neither is there any thing in the treatise which Dr. W. has opposed, that asserts the contrary.

I had said, If men are not obliged to approve of what God reveals, they may be right in disapproving it. Much is said to expose this to ridicule. It is said to be "either an *identical proposition*, or such an arbitrary combination of words as, it seems, will prove any thing." (pp. 85, 86.) It is not the first, unless a negative and a positive idea are necessarily the same. Christ declared, saying, *He that is not with me is against me*. This is as much an identical proposition as that in question, and might be treated in the same manner. If there is any mistake in the argument, it must lie in my taking it for granted, upon Christ's testimony just quoted, that, though there is an evident difference between a negative and a positive idea, yet, *in this case*, the difference is not such as to admit a possibility of a medium. Every one knows *there are cases* in which a medium between ideas of that description may have place; as between my "not watching my neighbour's house, and breaking it open." In that case, it is not my duty to do either: but, unless such a medium could be affirmed between *not* approving and *dis*approving of what God reveals, the argument still retains its force, and the syllogistical parade must appear to be only a play of words.

Dr. W. had given us reason to expect something very considerable against the distinction of *natural and moral inability*; but what does it all amount to? Why, ability or inability is not, strictly speaking, predicable of the *will*, but of the *man*. (pp. 89, 90.) I have looked over what I have written on that subject, and cannot find that I have any where predicated inability of the *will*, but of the *man*, through *the perversion of his will*. Be that, however, as it may, Dr. W.'s reasoning is of no force. An idle servant is enjoined a piece of labour: he replies, I *cannot* do it: he is told his inability lies in his *will*: he turns metaphysician, and gravely assures his master that inability is not predicable of the will, but of the man; and, therefore, insists upon it that he is blameless!

If Dr. W. means no more than this, that when the terms ability and inability are applied to the volitions of the mind they are not used in a *literal*, but in a *figurative* sense, I do not know any person that will dispute what he says. At the same time, it ought to be observed, that these terms *are* applied to what depends upon the volitions of the mind,

same of me. I desire to feel every degree of candour towards all that differ from me, which a person ought to feel towards

though it be in a figurative sense; and that, both in scripture and in common life. It is as common to say of a person of a very covetous temper, that he is *incapable* of a generous action, as it is to say of a person who has lost the use of his faculties, he is *incapable* of acting at all. And thus the scriptures apply the terms. It is as expressly said of Joseph's brethren, that they *could not* speak peaceably to him, as it is said of Zacharias, that he was dumb, and *could not* speak to the people when he came out of the temple.

The ideas, in these cases, are really and essentially distinct; and so long as they continue to be expressed, both in scripture and in common conversation, by the same word; if we would understand what we speak or write, a distinction concerning the nature of inability, amounting to what is usually meant by natural and moral, becomes absolutely necessary.

Dr. W. instead of overthrowing this sentiment, has, undesignedly, confirmed it; for though he can excuse a want of love to *God;* yet, if any thing is directed against *himself*, the case is altered. Our Lord, speaking of the *Pharisees*, and their blasphemous reproaches against him, says, "How *can* ye, being evil, speak good things?" Now, according to the theory of this writer, such an inability must sufficiently excuse them. But if a *Pharisee* speak evil of *him*, he is grievously provoked. Who these Pharisees are, and what they have said of Dr. W. I know not. I only ask, Is it not a pity but his philanthropy could excuse those who reproach *him*, as well as those who dishonour God?

Philanthropy* is, doubtless, an amiable temper of mind, when regulated by rules of righteousness; but there is a sort of love which the language of inspiration deems *hatred*. If I were, merely as a member of civil society, to visit a number of convicts under a righteous sentence of death; and if, instead of persuading them of the goodness of the laws which they had violated, of the great evil of their conduct, and of the equity of their punishment, and conjuring them to justify their country, and sue for mercy;—if, I say, instead of this, I should go about to palliate their crimes, and assure them, that the governor by whose laws they were condemned was the *author* of all their misfortunes; that, though I believed some of them, at least, must certainly suffer, yet, I must acknowledge, I could see no *justice* in the affair, there being no proportion between the punishment and the crime; I might call myself the friend of mankind, and give what flattering titles I pleased to what I had been doing: but impartial spectators would deem me an enemy to truth and righteousness, an enemy to my country, yea, an enemy to the very persons whose cause I espoused.

* Alluding to the title of his book.

those whom he believes to be mistaken; and this, I think, should go to such a length as to entertain the most sincere

But with the principles of Dr. W. I have no concern. There is reason to hope they are too undisguised to gain credit with serious minds. I am under no obligation to refute them; none, however, at present. Before the sentiments of any writer are entitled to a refutation, it is requisite that he pay some regard, at least, to sobriety and truth.

Whether Dr. W. can acquit himself of *wilful and known falsehood*, I cannot tell; but this I know, he has, in very many instances, imputed *sentiments* to me of which I never thought, and *sentences* which never proceeded from my pen. The former might be imputed to *mistake*; and if there had been only an instance or two of the latter, charity might have overlooked them; but the number of gross misrepresentations is such as admits of no such construction.

Not to mention his exclamations of "punishment without guilt"—of "unmerited damnation," (pp. 6, 7.) (which seem to be his own sentiments rather than mine; as he believes, if I understand him, that men and devils will be eternally punished for that of which God is the *author*;) (pp. 176. with 50. 55.) not to mention these, I say, what could he think of himself, in taking such freedoms as the following? "You draw I know not what conclusions concerning *faith*. As though a generation of vipers had been perfectly holy, if the fulness of time had not given Jesus to his people." (pp. 177, 178.)—"What combinations of deformity and weakness occur in many pious attempts to *spiritualize*, as YOU PHRASE IT, the works of nature." (p. 63.)—"To assert it to be the DUTY of all to believe *that they are of* the fold of the heavenly shepherd is an impious absurdity." (p. 95. Note.)—"When you inform us, that it is the duty of every man to believe that HE *is of the remnant of salvation*, you certainly are mistaken." (p. 151.)—"Tremendous deformity of thought! TO PERISH IF WE DO BELIEVE A LIE, TO BE DAMNED IF WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT!!!" (p. 153.)—"God cannot, you say, love any but his chosen, nor can *omnipotence itself* make any but his chosen love him." (p. 97.)—"You say, that omnipotence itself cannot make a man choose and delight in God." (p. 81.)

I should be glad to be informed in what *pages*, and in what *lines*, the above passages are to be found, and what authority Dr. W. had for these imputations.

In the *last* instance, it is true, he has referred us to the *page*; and there are *some* of the words, but nothing of the meaning to be found in page 181 of my treatise.* What is there said is, that "Omnipotence it-

* The references to Mr. Fuller's *Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation, &c.* are made to the *First* Edition. In the *Second* Edition, (from which this is printed,) several passages were altered, and some omitted: it is therefore impossible, generally, to refer the reader to the proper pages in this volume. ED.

good will towards their persons, and to put the most favourable construction that can in justice be put upon their supposed mistakes. But, after all, I believe truth to be important; and, so long as I consider the belief of it to be every person's duty, according to his natural capacities and opportunities to understand it, I cannot subscribe to the innocence of errour. God is the governor of the mind, as well as of the actions. He governs the former by rule, as well as the latter; and all deviations from that rule must arise either from its not being sufficiently level to our capacities, or from inattention, prejudice, or some other criminal cause.

I am far from wishing, in any case, to impute blame to another, farther than I am willing, on a similar supposition, to take it to myself. I am liable to err, as well as others: but then I apprehend, so far as I do err, that it is owing to a want of diligence or impartiality, or to some such cause; which God forbid that I should ever vindicate, by pronouncing it innocent!

If I am in errour in the sentiments here defended, it will be the part of candour in my opponents to allow that I sincerely believe what I write; but it would be a spurious kind of candour to acquit me of all blame in the affair. If I have erred, either God has not sufficiently revealed the thing in question, so as to make it level with my capacity; or else, I have not searched after truth with that earnestness and impartiality which I ought.

self cannot make THE FLESH choose and delight in God;" and what is there meant by the term *flesh*, is sufficiently plain from page 182.

It is possible, this gentleman may exclaim, and multiply words, and pretend to *infer* the above passages from what I have advanced. I do not believe that any one of them can be fairly inferred from any thing I have written. But, suppose he thinks they can; in order to acquit himself of falsehood, it is not enough, that, in his opinion, they may be *inferred* from what I have said; they must be proved, the chief of them, to be MY WORDS, and, all of them, MY SENTIMENTS; and the places where they are to be found, particularly specified. Any thing short of this will amount to an acknowledgment of the charge, and will require no farther notice in a way of reply.

REPLY TO MR. BUTTON.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION.—GENERAL REMARKS, &c.

WHEN the former treatise was published, I did not flatter myself with the thought of its meeting with no opposition. The sentiments there maintained I knew to be different from those of many whose characters I sincerely respected. I also knew that they had an equal right to examine as I had to advance. Any person, therefore, who might think me mistaken, and should be so disposed, was there invited to point out my mistakes; with the addition of only this single caution—that he would not only *call* them mistakes, but *prove* them such.

Mr. Button has accepted the invitation. He had a right to do so. He has "attempted," he says, "not barely to call the sentiments he opposes by the name of mistakes; but to prove them such, by solid, scriptural evidence." I have no objection to his attempt; but I do not think he has succeeded in it. The leading sentiments in the former treatise, which are charged as "mistakes," still appear, to me, in the light of scriptural and important truths. In defending them against Mr. B.'s exceptions, I hope I shall give him no just cause of offence. I am sure it is my desire to avoid every thing of a personal nature; and to attend simply to the inquiry, 'What is truth?' Before we enter upon the subject, however, it will be proper to notice some other things. Although, in writing

the pamphlet on which Mr B. has animadverted, it was my study to avoid wounding the character, or misrepresenting the sentiments of any one, whether dead or living; yet, if any thing therein be capable of such a construction, it becomes me to explain or retract it. Accordingly, I freely acknowledge, that the passage alluded to in the preface, (p. vii.) if applied to the body of those from whom I differ, is too severe. I am happy to say, I consider neither Mr. B. on the one hand, nor Philanthropos, on the other,* (whatever be the tendency of their principles, if pursued in their consequences,) as deserving that censure. I did not mean it indiscriminately of all whose sentiments I opposed; and I suppose the world, by this time, does not want evidence that it is true of some of them.

While truth and justice require the above acknowledgment, there are several other charges to which they equally oblige me to plead, Not guilty. I am accused (p. 4.) of having made a personal attack upon Mr. Brine; but, I conceive, without any reason. I do not think I remembered, at the time of writing, that Mr. Brine had used such a mode of expression: nor are they the express words of any author, though it is a manner of speaking which has been too frequently used. However, suppose I had it in recollection, and purposely omitted the mentioning of any name; surely, a censure passed upon a certain mode of speaking, though exemplified *nearly* in the words of some one author, is yet far enough off from a personal attack: and I should suppose the omission of the name would render it still farther.

Ought I to be accountable for it, if any persons have said, that "this book will cure some of their Gillism and Brineism?" (Preface, p. v.) I have a high opinion of the respectable characters alluded to. At the same time, the successors of these worthy men ought not to set them up as the standards of orthodoxy. In some things, they differed from one another; and, on this subject, from almost all who had gone before them, from hundreds of men whom they loved, and whom they knew to be their equals in piety and respectability. Yea, in some parts of *this controversy*, they took

* Philanthropos also complained of this passage, p. 9.

different grounds. Though Mr. Brine maintained the argument from Adam's incapacity to believe, yet Dr. Gill, when contending with the Arminians, gave it up.* But they were great and upright men, and thought for themselves; and it is to be hoped that others may do the same.

Mr. B. blames me for desiring people to read my book. (p. 6.) I only desired they would read it before they condemned it. And what law is that which will condemn a man before it hears him?

I am accused (p. 103.) of seeming to avail myself of the numbers I have on my side; but whoever reads p. 178 of my treatise will perceive that I there found my argument not upon the number of those who have been on my side, but upon the great works which God has wrought by them. These all went forth in the use of "precepts, prohibitions, and promises;" which the author of the *Further Inquiry*, whom I was there opposing, represents as irreconcileable with the covenant of grace.

Truth obliges me to repeat what I asserted, in p. 109, that the main objections against us originated with Arminius, or his followers. But I do not thereby insinuate, as Mr. B. (p. 75.) says I do, "that all who oppose my ideas of faith are Arminians."

I speak with the greatest sincerity, when I say I have a high esteem for Mr. B. and many others of his sentiments. I do not account them as adversaries, but as brethren in Christ, as fellow-labourers in the gospel; "and could rejoice (as was said before) to spend my days in cordial friendship with them." The most cordial friendship, however, does not require us to suppress what we believe to be a part of our sacred commission, but rather to endeavour to *speak the truth in love*.

Having said thus much in my own defence, I shall now proceed to make a few *general* remarks upon Mr. B.'s publication.

In the first place, I think it cannot fairly be called an answer to my treatise, were there no other reason than that, although something is said concerning most of the leading topics in dispute, yet the main arguments under those topics

* *Cause of God and Truth*, Part III. Chap. III. § 6.

are frequently left unnoticed. This will appear to any person who will inspect the contents of both performances, and compare what each has advanced under every topic.

Farther: Mr. B. has taken great pains to prove a number of things which I never thought of denying. Thus he labours to convince us that faith is the gift of God, the effect of spiritual illumination; that the Apostle, in 2 Thes. ii. 13. meant such a faith as is connected with sanctification of the Spirit; (p. 12.) that God has decreed only to punish for *sin*, for the breach of his commands; (p. 88.) that Christ's obedience was gloriously superior to that of Adam; (p. 78.) that human depravity shall not prove an absolute bar to an elect soul's believing; (p. 60.) that supreme love to God would not lead a Heathen to embrace Christ in any sense, because Christ is not revealed even in an external manner. (p. 85.) Since my sentiments are the same as Mr. B.'s, respecting these things, his labour in proving them seems, to me, to be lost.

The far greater part of Mr. B.'s *quotations* I heartily approve. They are in no wise contradictory to what I have advanced. Many others, particularly from Dr. Owen, which seem to be contrary, would be found otherwise, if the connexion and scope were consulted. But it is easy to foresee, that a particular discussion of this kind would lead off from the point in hand, and spin out the controversy to an unnecessary length. I shall, therefore, treat all that is said as if it were Mr. B.'s own, and no farther attend to any quotations, than as they contain argument which requires to be considered.*

* I ought to observe, that, although Calvin, Perkins, Goodwin, Owen, Charnock, Bunyan, M'Lauren, and others, are amongst the number of Mr. B.'s authorities, they are all decidedly against him in the main point in debate. Indeed, I believe, no writer of eminence can be named, before the present century, who denied it to be the duty of men in general to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls.

I think Mr. Hussey was the first person who, by the general tenor of his writings, laid the foundation for this sentiment. And yet even Mr. Hussey did not, that I recollect, expressly avow it. On the contrary, he allowed it to be "the *duty* of those who were not effectually called, to *hear spiritually*, and *open their hearts to Christ*; though, as he justly asserted, the preaching of this as their duty would not effect a *cure*." *Operations of Grace*, p. 442.

Mr. Hussey was, doubtless, a man of considerable eminence, in some

It seems, to me, that Mr. B. very frequently confounds the *thing* with the *cause* which produces it, and hereby loses himself and the argument in a maze of obscurity. This seems especially to be the case, when he enters upon the subject of that *spiritual life* which we derive from Christ.* If Mr. B. means that spiritual dispositions are not duties, considered as *under the idea of blessings*, that is what I have all along asserted. But if he mean that nothing can be our duty which is derived from Christ, and is a new-covenant blessing, then he not only asserts that which is irreconcileable with the prayers of the godly in all ages, (who have ever prayed for *grace* to perform what they acknowledged to be their *duty;)* but also contradicts his own sentiments. He allows, that the principle of grace in believers is a conformity to the *law*, though not to the *law only*. (p. 68.) Be it so: *so far*, then, as it is a conformity to the law, *so far* it was always incumbent upon us;

respects. Mr. Beart, in his *Eternal Law, and Everlasting Gospel*, I think, has given as fair and as candid an account of his writings as could well be given. But Mr. Hussey, though in some respects a great man, was, nevertheless, possessed of that warm turn of mind, which frequently misleads even the greatest of men, especially in defending a favourite sentiment.

Mr. Brine is the only writer of eminence who has expressly defended the sentiment. Dr. Gill took no active part in the controversy. It is allowed, that the negative side of the question was his avowed sentiment, and this appears to be implied in the general tenor of his writings. At the same time, it cannot be denied, that, when engaged in other controversies, he frequently argued in a manner favourable to our side; and his writings contain various concessions on this subject, which, if any one else had made them, would not be much to the satisfaction of our opposing brethren. However they may be inclined to represent us as verging towards Arminianism, it is certain that Dr. Gill, in his answer to Dr. Whitby, the noted Arminian, frequently makes use of our arguments: nor could he easily have gone through that work without them. (See his *Cause of God and Truth*, Part I. pp. 63. 69. 118. 159, 160. 165. Part II. pp. 88. 211. 215. 222. 226. First Edition.) And the very title of Mr. Brine's chief pamphlet against our sentiment, which he called *Motives to Love and Unity among Calvinists differing in Opinion*, as well as the most explicit acknowledgments therein contained, might teach those who pay any deference to his judgment, not to claim to themselves the title of Calvinists, exclusively.

* See pages 12. 28. 70. 91.

and yet I hope Mr. B. will not deny that our conformity to the law is derived from Christ, is a new-covenant blessing, and is wrought in the believer's heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Whether I have been so unhappy as, at times, to express myself in a manner not sufficiently explicit, or whether Mr. B. has been wanting in calm and close attention; so it is, that he sometimes proceeds upon a total misunderstanding of the argument. This will appear to an attentive reader, if he please to compare pages 10, 11, of mine, with 12, 13, of his remarks; and 59, 60, with 54; also 131, with 89, concerning Adam.

The places are too numerous to recite, wherein principles appear, to me, to be *assumed*, instead of being proved, and conclusions to be drawn from premises which are themselves the very subject in debate. Thus we are told, "Pharaoh had an express *command* to let the people go;" therefore, it was his duty to have complied.* (p. 88.) Very well; what then? Mr. B.'s meaning must be to add, 'But there is no express command to believe in Christ; therefore,' &c. I answer, that this is begging the question. I suppose there *is* such a command; but, whether there is, or not, the contrary ought not to be taken for granted.

Mr. B. does not fail to make his *own reasonings* and *observations* in one place, the data of his conclusions in another. Thus we are told, "There is no command for special faith, AS WE HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO PROVE; *therefore*, no one shall be condemned for the want of it." (p. 89.) Again, in the same page, "Adam had not faith, or any other spiritual disposition, AS I HAVE ALREADY OBSERVED: *therefore*," &c.—But, passing general remarks, let us follow Mr. B. in what he has advanced under each of the particular topics in debate.

* In no one case do the scriptures speak so strongly of God's abandoning a man to the hardness of his own heart, as in that of Pharaoh; yet the Lord God of the Hebrews said, "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" Exod. x. 3. plainly showing, that the want of a better mind was no excuse for his refusal to obey. R.

SECTION II.

ON THE NATURE AND DEFINITION OF FAITH.

I HAVE the happiness to find Mr. B. agreeing with me, that faith in Christ is not a persuasion of our interest in him. But, though he agrees with me in this point, yet he is far from being satisfied with the definition I have given. He objects, that it makes no mention of "supernatural illumination and assistance," (p. 12.) and proposes one that shall include those ideas. If, by this, he only means to maintain, that the Holy Spirit is the sole *author*, or *cause*, of faith, no one, I should think, who has read my former treatise, can entertain a doubt of my maintaining the same doctrine.

But, though this is a truth which I verily believe, yet I must still be excused from thinking it necessary to a *definition*. Definitions are designed, I apprehend, to express the *nature* and not the *causes* of things. Thus, if *man* were to be defined a rational creature, created of God, the last part of the definition would be superfluous.

What Mr. B.'s ideas of faith are, it is difficult to learn. Mr. Brine says, "Acting faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation;"* and Mr. Button says, "I do think that every man is bound cordially to receive, and heartily to approve of the gospel." (p. 49.) But, it seems, special faith is something distinct from all this; so distinct, that this has "nothing to do" with it; (p. 54.) yea, so distinct, that a person may do all this, and yet perish everlastingly. And yet it is not a believing of our interest in Christ: what, then, is it?

* The reader may see a larger definition of faith, in a letter from Mr. Brine to Mr. Ryland of Warwick, in the Second Part of *Serious Remarks on the Different Representations of Evangelical Doctrine, &c.* by J. Ryland, of Bristol. pp. 13, 14. Ed.

Mr. B. tells us what is its *cause*, and what its *effects;* but what the thing *itself* is, we have yet to learn.

Sometimes, I think I can understand him; but I am soon again at a loss. "It is such a reception of the truth," says he, "as transforms the soul into the image of Christ." (p. 49.) Very well: then, it seems, it is a reception of the truth, after all; such a reception as is productive of real and transforming effects. This is the very thing for which I plead. Yes; but "a person may cordially receive the truth, and yet not be transformed into the image of Christ." (p. 18.) Indeed! Then how are we to distinguish true faith from that which is counterfeit or partial? According to this, there is no difference as to the thing itself, only a difference in its cause and effects.

But did not "Christ's hearers at Nazareth, and the stony-ground hearers, cordially receive the truth?" (p. 18.) I answer, No: the latter did not *understand* it,* and, therefore, could not cordially receive it: and as to the former, they gazed upon the Lord Jesus, and bare him witness, "that he was right," as Dr. Gill says, "in applying Isaiah's prophecy to the Messiah; but not that he himself was the Messiah;" much less did they cordially receive his gospel. The scripture declares, concerning the gospel, that, if we confess it with the mouth, and *believe it in the heart*, we shall be saved; but, it seems to me, the tendency of Mr. B.'s reasoning is to prove the contrary.

But true faith "is such a belief as brings Christ into the soul: *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*" (p. 19.) Answer: If by bringing Christ into the soul, is meant his having the supreme place in our best affections, (which, I apprehend, is what the apostle intended in the passage referred to,) then what Mr. B. affirms is freely granted; nor is it any way inconsistent with what he opposes.

"Ought sinners to realize truth," Mr. B. asks, "*so as to affect their own hearts?*" (p. 21.) This, I suppose, he thinks is self-evident absurdity. He himself, however, allows it to be every man's duty to love God with *all his heart;* and when he shall inform me how this is to be done without the heart's be-

* See Matt. xiii. 23. 1 Cor. ii. 14

ing affected, I will answer the foregoing question. But is it "our duty to do that which God claims as his prerogative?" I answer, It is God's prerogative to write his law in the human heart: and yet every one ought to have that law within his heart; or, in other words, to love it with his whole soul. How strange it is, that the same thing, in different respects, should be denied to be *God's gift* and *our obedience!* I sincerely wish Mr. B. had attentively considered the arguments which I quoted (p. 60.) from Dr. Owen. Those arguments, doubtless, ought to have been solidly answered, before any exclamations were made of the absurdity of making that the duty of men, which it is God's own work effectually to produce.

"Devils and wicked men, it is said, believe the goodness of gospel blessings for *others*, though not for *themselves*." (p. 17.) By their believing them to be *good* for others, Mr. B. appears evidently to mean *advantageous*, or *profitable;* and, in that sense, there is no doubt but what he says is true: that is no proof, however, that they believe in their real, intrinsic *excellency* and *glory*. Cain believed the *advantage* which his brother Abel had in bringing a lamb for an offering, and hated him accordingly; but he did not believe his own condition as a sinner to be such, as that his offering, being presented without respect to the Mediator, *deserved* to be rejected. Properly speaking, he did not believe in the *necessity* of a mediator, much less in the *fitness* and glory of such a way of approaching the Deity. The scriptures speak of those who believe not, as *blind to the glory* of the gospel.* Whatever goodness wicked men believe to be in the blessings of the gospel; they do not believe the life and portion of the godly to be so good as, all things considered, to be preferred before their own.

Mr. B. it seems, thinks that "a man may pursue evil, *as evil*." (p. 23.) In this I do not differ from him. Nay, I believe that unregenerate persons, without any exception, pursue evil, as evil. If any ask me to explain my assertion, quoted by Mr. B. that "human nature cannot pursue evil, as evil," I refer them to the note in the very same page from whence the

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

quotation is taken. Unregenerate men pursue evil, as that which is agreeable to their own sinful inclinations. In so doing, they pursue it as a moral evil, and as a natural good. He who pursues evil, considered as moral, acts against his conscience. This was the case with Felix, in dismissing Paul. But no one pursues moral evil itself, under the notion of its being *unlovely*. The instances Mr. B. has produced do not prove this. People do not take poison, or pursue death itself, under any other notion than that of its being a good. The Gentoo women, who voluntarily cast themselves into the fire at their husbands' death, are no more in love with death for its *own sake*, than we are; but are struck either with the *honour* of so dying, or with the hope of being the happier hereafter. People are not guilty of suicide, but under the notion of its containing a sort of good. They consider it as adapted to release them from a burden which they conceive themselves unable to sustain; not considering what follows death, in the world to come.

But does not every man "believe that he shall *die?* and yet does he act accordingly?" (p. 22.) To this I reply, Death is more an object of *intuition*, than of faith. If people did not *see* the death of their fellow-creatures, and had no other evidence that they must die, but the testimony of God; they would be as apt to disbelieve that, as they are other things. And, even as it is, if they realized death, *and what follows*, it would have an effect upon their spirit and life, very different from what it has.

Mr. B. produces a number of *quotations*, for the purpose of giving us a better definition of faith than that which he opposes. (p. 26.) But some of these were never designed by their authors as definitions, but rather as *descriptions* of faith. Those of them which represent it as "such a believing of the testimony of God in the sacred scriptures, as, in a way of trust and dependence, to resign ourselves up to Jesus Christ," do not in any wise contradict what I have advanced. On the contrary, I should be very willing to let the above stand as a definition of faith. Nor have I any objection to have it prefaced with its being "a grace of the Holy Spirit," &c. excepting this, that it does not appear, to me, at all necessary to introduce the *author*, or *cause*, of any thing in a definition of that thing.

At the same time, I would not wish to contend about words. I therefore acknowledge, that it may be of use, when discoursing about faith in certain connexions, to speak of it in a more large or extensive meaning. That might be the case, for aught I know, with respect to some of Mr. B.'s authorities. But what if they had a mind to bring into their definitions the *cause* and the *effects* of faith? And if another, with a view to simplify the subject, define it merely by what it is in itself considered, without any design, however, of denying either cause or effect; does it follow that his definition must be defective?

Wherein does the definition of Coverdale, Ferrar, Hooper, Taylor, Philpot, Bradford, Crome, Sanders, Rogers, and Lawrence, differ from mine, except in this, that they mean to define not only the thing itself, but its cause and effects? "It is," say they, "not only an opinion, but a certain *persuasion*, wrought by the Holy Ghost, which doth illuminate the mind, and supple the heart to submit itself unfeignedly to God." (p. 27.) The thing *itself* they make to be neither more nor less than PERSUASION.

It never was my design to exclude the idea of *trust*, or *confidence*, in Christ. Whether that be of the essence of faith itself, or an effect which instantaneously follows, I always supposed them inseparable. It was before allowed, (p. 23.) that "it is in this large sense, including not only the belief of the truth, but the actual out-going of the soul towards Jesus Christ in a way of *dependence* upon him, that faith in him is generally to be taken in the New-Testament:" and it was in this sense that I undertook to prove it incumbent on men in general.

Those with whom I contend, will allow it to be the duty of every one, where the gospel comes, to believe it. I knew this would be allowed, when I penned the former publication. My whole design, in the *first part*, was to reason, upon *their own principles*, with those who differ from me. They allow it to be every one's duty to believe the gospel. I therein endeavoured to prove, that, in allowing this, they allow that to be the duty of men which is of the essence of special faith. The arguments used in proof of this, have not, I think, been overthrown. I therefore earnestly entreat Mr. B. and those of his

sentiments, to consider attentively the following questions: Can any person truly believe the gospel, and yet perish everlastingly? and, Can those scriptures, which were produced before in proof of the contrary,* be fairly explained upon such a supposition?

Mr. B. thinks I have mistaken the meaning of John iii. 36. and 1 John v. 20. where I suppose a believing *on Christ*, and a *not believing Christ*, are spoken of as *opposites*, in such a way as implies that there is no medium between them. Mr. B. thinks, it seems, that they are not opposites. (p. 24.) According to what he has said, the criterion of true faith lies in the terms *in* or *on;* for he observes, that "it is not said, He that believeth not *on* the Son, &c. No: it is not for the want of *special faith* he is condemned, but because he believes not what he says." (p. 25.) To this I answer—First: The term *on* is used to express such a faith as is not connected with salvation, John xii. 42. Secondly: suppose it were otherwise, and the phrase believing *on* Christ were to be the criterion of special faith; this would make against Mr. B. rather than for him. For it is said of the unbelieving Jews, that "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not *on* him; (John xii. 37.) plainly intimating, that they had such evidence as *ought* to have induced them to believe *on* him. On the other hand, Christ says, the Spirit shall reprove the world of *sin*, because they believe not *on* me. And contrary to what Mr. B. asserts, men are as expressly said to be "condemned, because they believe not *on* the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John iii. 18.

Mr. B. before he concludes his Fourth Letter, throws in one argument against faith being a duty: "If," says he, "this faith be the duty of man, and is required by the law, it is then, undoubtedly, a *work;* and when the apostle says, By grace ye are saved, through faith, we must consider him as joining grace and works together." (p. 29.) To this it is replied, Every thing required by the law, I should think, is not a *work*. That sacred standard of right and wrong requires a holy state of mind, as well as the exercises of it. But supposing it *is* a

* 1 John v. 1. Mark xvi. 16. Rom. x. 9. Acts viii. 37. See the scriptures urged in my former treatise, pp. 27, 28.

work, does not Mr. B. maintain the same? Only a few pages back, he quoted several definitions of faith from certain eminent divines; most of whom speak of it as a *coming* to Christ, a *trusting* in him for salvation. Now, is not this a *work*, or *exercise*, of the mind? And yet we are saved by *grace*, notwithstanding; for God does not save us out of regard to faith as our act, but on account of him in whom it terminates.

A poor invalid, who derives his subsistence wholly from the public, may be said, with the greatest propriety, to live, not by his own works, but upon the generosity of others. This, however, does not imply, that he is not *active* in his applications for relief; or that every such application may not, in some sense, be called a *work*. Yet, it plainly appears, he does not live upon his applications, considered as *acts*, or *exercises*, but upon what, through those means, he freely receives: and it would be contrary to the common use of language to say, that he lived partly by grace, and partly by works.

Before I conclude this section, it may not be amiss to drop a few additional thoughts concerning the defining of faith: these, however, have no immediate reference to Mr. B. but are merely added with a view, if it might be, to throw some farther light upon the subject.

I. Faith, in its most general sense, signifies a credit of *some testimony*, whether that testimony be true or false.

II. When we speak of the *faith of the gospel*, as a belief of the *truth*, it is not to be understood of *all kinds* of truth, nor even of all kinds of scripture-truth. A true believer, so far as he understands it, *does* believe all scripture-truth; and to discredit any one truth of the Bible, knowing it to be such, is a damning sin; but yet it is not the credit of a chronological or historical fact, for instance, that denominates any one a true believer. The peculiar truth, by embracing of which we become believers in Christ, is *the gospel*, or the *good news* of salvation through his name. The belief of this *implies* the belief of other truths; such as the goodness of God's government, as the lawgiver of the world; the evil of sin; our lost and ruined condition by it; our utter insufficiency to help ourselves, &c. but it is the soul's embracing, or falling in with, the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that peculiarly denominates us true believers.

III. True faith *includes a spiritual* understanding of the glory of the gospel, but it includes *something more*. It does not appear, to me, to have its seat barely in the understanding, but in the whole soul. It is the whole soul's yielding up its own false notions and dependences, and falling in with God's way of salvation by Jesus Christ. By a spiritual discernment of the glory of the gospel, we *see the Son;* and, by the whole soul's concurring with it, we *believe in him*. It is with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness. If it is said, The *heart* here is not opposed to the understanding, but to the *mouth*, with which confession is made unto salvation; I answer, This is true: but then neither is it used, I apprehend, for the understanding, to the exclusion of the affections, but for the whole soul, in distinction from the mouth, by which our faith is openly professed.

IV. Though, as I attempted to prove in my former treatise, true faith does not include an *assurance* of our interest in Christ; yet it is ever attended with an *application* of the truths of the gospel to our own particular cases. "When the scriptures teach," says the excellent Mr. Downame, "we are to receive instruction, for the enlightening of our own mind; when they admonish, we are to take warning; when they reprove, we are to be checked; when they comfort, we are to be cheered and encouraged; when they command any grace, we are to desire and embrace it; when they command any duty, we are to hold ourselves enjoined to do it; when they promise, we are to hope; when they threaten, we are to be terrified, as if the judgment were denounced against us; and when they forbid any sin, we are to think that they forbid it unto us. By which application we shall make all the rich treasures contained in the scriptures wholly our own, and in such a powerful and peculiar manner enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as if they had been wholly written for us, and for none other else besides us. *Guide to Godliness*, p. 647.

These observations may be considered as an addition to what was written before; and I believe they will be found to be perfectly consistent with it.

SECTION III.

CONTAINING A REPLY TO MR. B.'s FIFTH AND SIXTH LETTERS, WHEREIN HE REMARKS ON THOSE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHERE FAITH IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMMANDED OF GOD.

TO prove that faith in Christ is the duty of unconverted sinners, divers passages of scripture were produced, which represent it as the *command* of God. In answer to these, Mr. B. observes in general, that commands are sometimes used which do not imply duty, but denote some extraordinary exertion of divine power, as when God said to the Israelitish nation, "*Live*," &c. (p. 31.) But are the commands in question to be so understood? Mr. B. does not pretend to say any such thing. He adds,

"Commands sometimes denote *encouragement;* as in Isa. li. 17. *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem,* &c. Acts xvi. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;* and John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*" (p. 32.) Very true: but do they denote *merely* encouragement? Can the idea of duty be excluded? Was it not the duty of the Jews, for instance, when Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus, and a proclamation was issued in their favour, to bestir themselves? Would it not have been their sin to have neglected the opportunity, and continued careless in Babylon? Was it not the duty of the jailor to follow the Apostle's counsel, and would it not have been sinful to have done otherwise? Was it not the duty of the disciples to place an equal confidence in the testimony of Christ as in that of the Father; and would it not have been sinful to have distrusted him? "These passages," says Mr. B. "do not appear *so much* to carry in them the nature of injunctions, as of directions and encouragements." But do they carry in them the nature of injunctions *at all?* or can that idea be excluded from them?

It seems, he himself thinks it cannot, or he would not have so expressed himself.

Mr. B. now proceeds to consider the particular passages produced. He remarks, on the Second Psalm, that "kissing sometimes denotes no more than civil homage and subjection; as in 1 Sam. x. 1. where we are told, that Samuel anointed Saul, and *kissed* him; which was not, I presume," says he, "a spiritual act, but nothing more than a token of allegiance, loyalty, &c." (p. 34.) I think with him, the case of Samuel's kissing Saul serves for a fine illustration of the passage;* and if Christ had been a *civil governor*, and *nothing else*, then, it is allowed, that civil homage, subjection, and loyalty, would have been the whole of his due; but not otherwise. According to the nature of his government must be the kind of subjection required. If Christ's kingdom had been of this world, or somewhat like what the Jews expected it to be, such an exposition as the above might be admitted; but, if his government be *spiritual*, then subjection and loyalty to him must be the same.

The comment on Jer vi. 16. (p. 35.) I think, needs but little reply. It may deserve to be considered, Whether, if the people there addressed had been of Mr. B.'s sentiments, they might not have found some more plausible and less mortifying answer than that which they were obliged to give. Surely they might have replied, 'Stand in the ways, and *see!* we have not a capacity for spiritual *discernment*. Ask for the good old way, and *walk* therein! it was never *discovered* to us. All that we are obliged to is, diligently to attend public ordinances, and this we have done from our youth up; what more would the prophet have?' But these were sentiments, it seems, of which they had never heard. They were obliged, therefore, to speak out the honest, though awful truth, WE WILL NOT WALK THEREIN.

John xii. 36. *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* "These," it is said, "are evidently words of direction to inquiring people." (p. 37.) That they were inquiring people, is true; but not such as inquired from any thing of a right spirit; which is what Mr. B

* See Dr. Jennings's *Antiquities*, Vol. I. p. 184.

must mean to suggest. They are called *the people*, (verse 34.) in distinction from the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus;* and it immediately follows what sort of people they were. *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, &c.*

Lest the foregoing remark should not suffice, it is supposed that the passage may speak only of such a believing as falls short of special faith. (p. 38.) But unless it can be proved that the phrase *children of light* is ever used of any but true believers, this supposition is inadmissible.

Mr. B. speaks frequently of Christ's addresses being by way of "*ministerial direction.*" Be it so: I do not see how this alters the case, unless we could suppose that Christ, as a preacher, *directed* people to a way in which it was not their duty to walk. In short, if there were not another passage in the Bible besides the above; that were, in my opinion, sufficient to prove the point contested.

John vi. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* From the connexion of this passage, it was observed, that the phrase *work of God* could not be understood of a work which God should *work in* them, but of a work which he *required of* them.† Mr. B. however, takes it in the first sense, and thinks it "very clear and plain, from the whole context, that this special faith is no duty." (p. 41.) To which I only say, That which appears so *plain* to Mr. Button, did not appear so to Mr. Brine. Mr. Brine, it seems, felt difficulties where Mr. Button feels none. Though he agrees with Mr. Button, that special faith is not a duty, yet he undoubtedly felt a difficulty in the passage in question.

* See Dr. Gill on verse 34.

† The reader is desired to observe, I never denied, but constantly maintained, that faith, wherever it exists, *is* the effect of divine influence; as is every thing else in us, which is truly good; but I as well maintain, that it is man's duty; and that *this* passage means the latter, and not the former.

He felt the force of that remark, that the meaning of the answer must be determined by that of the question; and he did not suppose, when they asked, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? that they were inquiring what they must do that they might work such works as were peculiar to an arm of omnipotence. Mr. Brine, therefore, never pretended to understand it of a work which should be *wrought* in them, but of "an ACT ACCEPTABLE AND PLEASING TO GOD."*

Dr. Gill, in his *Cause of God and Truth*, (Part I. p. 154.) understands the passage as speaking of such a faith as is not connected with salvation. Mr. Brine never pretended to this, but allows it to speak of special faith. The Doctor, however, does not suppose that the *work of God* means a work that was to be wrought in them, but a work that was required of them. He there explains it, not of an operation of God, but of what was enjoined by his "*will* and *commandment*."

But Mr. Button thinks it "strange, if faith in Christ were the *first* great duty incumbent upon them, that they should *first* be directed to labour for that which should endure to everlasting life, as they were in verse 27." (p. 40.) It is replied, Labouring for that which should endure to everlasting life, *includes* faith in Christ; that being the only way in which eternal life can be obtained: and it is no unusual thing first to lay down a *general* direction, and then proceed to that which is more *particular*.

John v. 23. It is the Father's will *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* As Mr. B. has not thought proper to answer what was advanced from this passage, it need only be replied, That, according to his sense of it, Christ ought to be honoured in one character, but not in another." (p. 42.)

As to what is said of Isa. lv. 6. (the 7th verse, I observe, is passed over,) that "Arminians have quoted it;" (p. 42.) what is that to the purpose? It has some meaning; and one should suppose that their quoting it has not destroyed that meaning. Mr. B. must excuse me in not being satisfied with a *part* of an exposition upon it from Dr. Gill. The whole of the Doctor's words, I observe, are not quoted. *Abundant pardon* was

* *Motives to Love and Unity*, p. 42.

never promised to such an attendance as this quotation makes to be their duty.

Simon Magus was exhorted to pray for *the pardon of sin*. Mr. B. asks, "Who denies it?" (p. 43.) I answer, Many, who deny that faith is the duty of the unregenerate, deny that it is their duty to pray at all; and especially to pray for *spiritual blessings*, such as the forgiveness of sin. I rejoice, however, that Mr. B. is not of that sentiment.

But it was asked, In *whose name* ought Simon to have prayed for that blessing? To this we have received no answer. It was likewise asked, Whether spiritual blessings ought to be sought in the only way in which they can be found, or in any other. In answer to this, we are told, "They may be sought after in the use of means, without special faith; and that is all which is here exhorted to." Is Mr. B. sure of that? If so, Simon was barely exhorted to do as Cain did; to bring an offering without respect had to the great atonement for acceptance; to do that by which it was impossible to please God. After all, are we to understand Mr. B. that sinners ought not to seek spiritual blessings *in the name of Christ*, but *in some other way?* Surely he will not affirm this; and yet I do not see how he can avoid it.

But we are told, that Simon was not exhorted to "find, or get pardon of sin, but to pray for it." This is true, but not to the purpose. Faith in Christ is not the finding, or getting, of pardon, but the *means* of obtaining it. We *come* to Christ, that we may have *life*. The one is the way in which we find, or enjoy the other. This is farther confirmed by the passage which we shall next consider.

Rom. ix. 31, 32. *Because they sought it not by faith*, &c. "By faith is here meant," says Mr. B. "not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, the gospel; as appears clearly by its being opposed to the *law*." (p. 43.) Suppose it were so, seeking righteousness by the gospel in opposition to the law, would amount to the same thing as the other. But this is not the case: faith is not here opposed to the *law*, but to the *works* of the law; and is, therefore, here to be understood of the right way of seeking righteousness, which is *in the name of Christ*.

Concerning those passages which exhort men to put their

trust in the Lord, Mr. B. remarks, that "trust is a natural duty: But what," he asks, "has this to do with evangelical trust?" (p. 44.) Why did he not answer what was said on that subject in p. 46? Why did he pass over that dilemma? As to what he says on the Fourth Psalm, that the persons there addressed were "good men;" (p. 45.) it is replied, They, certainly, were wicked, who are addressed in the second verse; and there is no notice given, in any part of the Psalm, of a change of person. To understand *sacrifices of righteousness* of sacrifices *righteously obtained*, appears, to me, to be putting a low sense upon the phrase, and what, I think, is not at all countenanced by similar phraseology in scripture. The same mode of speaking occurs in Deut. xxxiii. 19. and in Psalm li. 19. neither of which passages can well be thought to mean barely, that the sacrifices should not be obtained by robbery.

Mr. B. thinks, it seems, that that declaration, "Whosoever will, let him come," is not indefinite, but limited, and so is not a warrant for any sinner to come to Jesus Christ. "All," says he, "have not a *will*, therefore it is not a warrant for every man." (p. 46.) That multitudes of men are unwilling to forego self-will, self-conceit, and self-righteousness, and to venture their souls wholly upon the Lord Jesus, is a melancholy fact: but to conclude from *thence*, that they have no warrant so to do, is a very extraordinary species of reasoning. If "Whosoever will, let him come," be not an indefinite mode of expression, Mr. B. should have pointed out what sort of language should have been used for such a purpose.

A generous benefactor, in the hard season of the year, procures a quantity of provision to be distributed amongst the poor of a country village. He orders public notice to be given, that EVERY POOR MAN WHO IS WILLING TO RECEIVE IT, SHALL IN NO WISE MEET WITH A REFUSAL. A number of the inhabitants, however, are not only poor, but proud, and *cannot* find in their hearts to unite with the miserable throng in receiving an alms. Query, Would it be just for such inhabitants to allege, that they had no *warrant* to apply? or, that the declaration was limited; seeing it extended only to such as were *willing*; and, for their parts, they were *unwilling*?

If it were expedient to give such objectors a serious answer, they might be asked, In what language could the donor have expressed himself, to have rendered his declaration more indefinite?

If it is insisted, that, to make an invitation indefinite, it should be addressed to men simply *as sinners;* it is replied, If that would put the matter out of doubt, the scripture is not wanting in that mode of speaking, any more than in the other: *Hearken unto me, ye* stout-hearted and far from righteousness, *I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry.—Let the* wicked *forsake his way, and the* unrighteous man *his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon* For other passages to the same purpose, I ask leave to refer to pages 63 and 64 of the former treatise.

SECTION IV.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S SEVENTH LETTER, ON THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEN TO EMBRACE WHATEVER GOD REVEALS.—HIS CHARGE OF ILLIBERALITY, &c. &c.

IT was observed, in my former publication, that every man was bound cordially to receive, and heartily to approve, whatever God reveals. A definition of faith was also quoted from Mr. Brine; wherein he says, "Acting faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation." And, from thence, it was argued, that, if faith was not incumbent on men in general, then they were right in not thinking suitably of Christ, &c.

Mr. B. here expresses his "astonishment;" and, without hesitation, charges me with "illiberality." (p. 48.) To this I

answer, I apprehended this to be a *consequence* naturally arising from the sentiments I opposed; but never imagined that they who imbibed these sentiments *held* or *asserted* this consequence: yet, as Paul urged the *consequences* of denying the resurrection, in order to show the erroneousness of the premises from whence those consequences followed, I apprehend I might do the same. Such a mode of reasoning is universally practised by both inspired and uninspired writers. The Corinthians might have charged the apostle with illiberality, and have had, for aught I see, as good reason for so doing, as Mr. B. had for charging it upon me. He had said, *If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.* They might have exclaimed against these consequences, and said of him who urged them, 'He *knows* these are sentiments which we never asserted, or even imagined.'

Mr. B. instead of exclaiming in this sort, should have *invalidated* those consequences; but this he has not attempted: and, unless he will maintain it to be men's duty to *stand neuter*, (which our Lord declared to be impossible,) and neither think nor choose at all in the affair, I do not see how they can be fairly removed. The difficulty stands thus: "If true faith is no other than suitable thoughts of Christ, and a hearty choice of him as God's appointed way of salvation," as Mr. Brine affirms, then it is either men's duty to think suitably of Christ, or it is not; to choose him as God's appointed way of salvation, or not. If it is, the point is given up; if it is not, then it must be *right* in them either not to think suitably of Christ, or not to think at all; either to choose some other way of salvation, or not to choose at all.

It is not sufficient for Mr. B. to allege, that he *disclaims* these sentiments; that he allows an opposition to God's way of salvation to be sinful: I *know* he does; and it is with pleasure I acknowledge it: but the question is, Is he herein *consistent with himself?* The Corinthians could have said the same in respect of *Christ not being raised;* none of them thought of asserting that, though they asserted what must necessarily infer it. If it is men's *sin* to oppose and reject the Lord Jesus Christ; it must be their duty to choose and ac-

cept him, or else to stand neuter, and so be neither for him nor against him.

Much the same might be said, in reply to what Mr. B. frequently speaks of as due to the gospel, viz. "a veneration for it." This veneration either amounts to a hearty *choice* of Christ, as God's appointed way of salvation—to a being on *his side;* or it does not. If it does, this implies special faith; for to *choose* that way, is the same thing as to be *willing* to be saved in that way: (which Mr. B. allows is the case with no unregenerate man:) and to be on *Christ's side*, is the same thing as to be a real Christian. If it does not, then I should be glad to know, what sort of a veneration for the gospel that must be which can consist with an *unwillingness* to fall in with its grand designs, and a reigning *aversion* from its great Author and Object?

What Mr. B. says (p. 49.) of "peace being made," and "the work being done," is a great and glorious truth, on which depends all my salvation and all my desire. I rejoice with him in the doctrines of everlasting love and the eternal settlements of grace. But, as the covenant between the Father and the Son, before time, does not supersede a believer's actually covenanting with God in time;* so neither, as I apprehend, does peace being made by the blood of Christ's cross supersede a peace taking place between God and us, on our believing. God, as the lawgiver of the world, is represented as *angry* with the wicked every day. Every unbeliever is said to be under *condemnation:* he is *under the law*, as a covenant of works; and, being of the works of the law, he is under the *curse*. On the contrary, those who believe in Christ are *not under the law, but under grace:* their sins are *forgiven* for Jesus' sake; there is no *condemnation* to them; God is represented as being *pacified* towards them for all that they have done against him.† This pacification, however, is not founded upon their faith, or returning to God; but upon the atonement of Christ, in which their faith terminates: hence, though they are said, being justified by faith, to have *peace* with God; yet it is *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

* See Jer. l. v. Isa. xliv. 5. † Psa. vii. 11. John iii. 18. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. vi. 14. 1 John ii. 12. Rom. viii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 63. Rom. v. 1.

When I spake of the gospel's "publishing a way wherein God can and will make peace with sinners, on terms infinitely honourable to himself," &c. I had no respect to *terms* and *conditions* to be performed by us, that should entitle us to blessings annexed to such performance. My meaning was rather this: that Christ, having obeyed the law, and endured the curse, and so fulfilled the *terms* of his eternal engagement, God can, in a way honourable to all his perfections, pardon and receive the most guilty sinner that shall return to him in Christ's name.

In respect of *terms* and *conditions*, as applied to faith in Christ; though I believe such faith to be incumbent on men in general, yet, properly speaking, I do not suppose either that or any thing else in us to be the condition of salvation; unless by condition is barely meant *that to which the promise of salvation is made, and without which we cannot be saved.* In this sense, I should have no objection to its being so called; and I should think Mr. B. could have none, any more than myself. But, as it is a term liable to abuse, and apt to convey very different sentiments, I had rather express my ideas in other language, than go about to qualify it by an explanation.

Dr. Owen does not reject the word *condition*, but puts an explanation upon it, suited to his sentiments. "It is the appointment of the Lord," says he, "that there should be such a connexion and coherence between the things purchased for us by Jesus Christ, that the one should be a means and way of attaining the other; the one the *condition*, and the other the thing promised upon that condition; but both equally and alike *procured for us by Jesus Christ;* for if either be omitted in his purchase, the other would be vain and fruitless." *Death of Death*, Book II. Chap. I.* Whatever words may

* See also Dr. Owen on Heb. viii. 10. Vol. III. p. 269. "Unto a full and complete interest in all the promises of the covenant, faith on our part, from which evangelical repentance is inseparable, is required. But whereas these also are wrought in us by virtue of that promise and grace, which are absolute, it is a mere strife about words to contend whether they may be called conditions, or no. Let it be granted, on the *one* hand, that we cannot have an actual participation of the relative grace of this covenant in adoption and justification, without faith, or believing; and,

be used, I know of no difference in this matter between Dr. Owen's sentiments and my own.

That the gospel is an *embassy of peace*, addressed to sinners indefinitely, and that any sinner whatever has a warrant to apply to the Saviour, and a promise of acceptance on his application, is evident from the whole current of scripture. To oppose Arminianism by the denial of this well-known truth, must be an unsuccessful attempt. Instead of destroying, it is the most effectual method to establish it. No Arminian, so long as he has a Bible in his hand, can ever be persuaded, that the language of scripture-exhortations to repentance and faith in Christ is not indefinite. If, then, his system is acknowledged to stand or fall with the universality of such exhortations, he will not desire a greater concession. He is well satisfied of this, that, if general invitations speak the language of Arminianism, the Bible must be written upon Arminian principles. Such a concession, therefore, tends to confirm him in his sentiments; and, I believe, such a way of speaking and writing amongst the Calvinists has been more than a little advantageous to the Arminian cause.

God gathers his elect out of mankind by a gospel equally addressed to one man as to another. No one, on his first application to Christ, comes to him considering himself as an elect person, or as having any peculiar privilege belonging to him above the rest of mankind; but every such person applies to Christ merely as a poor guilty, self-ruined sinner; and, if the gospel did not speak an indefinite language to sinners, considered as such, he could have no hope. If it is said, Yes: he feels himself a *sensible* sinner, and so considers himself as hereby warranted to apply for mercy: I answer, This is supposing that a person may have solid evidence to conclude himself elected, before he has believed in Christ; that is, while he is an unbeliever; than which nothing surely can be more unscriptural and dangerous. The heart of every man who has heard the gospel either does, or does not, fall in with God's way of salvation by Jesus Christ. If it does he is a believer;

on the *other*, that this faith is wrought in us, given unto us, bestowed upon us, by that grace of the covenant which depends on no condition *in us*, as unto its discriminating administration; and I shall not concern myself what men will call it." R.

if it does not, he is an unbeliever, and has no revealed warrant to conclude himself an object of divine favour. A being *sensible* of our guilty and lost condition, is absolutely necessary to an application to the Saviour; not, however, as affording us a *warrant* to come to Christ, but as being necessary to the act itself of coming. A right spirit does not give us a warrant to do a right action; but it is essential to our compliance with the warrant, which we already have.

Mr. B. thinks I have given a wrong sense to 2 Cor. v. (p. 50.) Suppose it should be so, I apprehend the weight of the proposition does not rest upon that passage. I am not convinced, however, by what has been said concerning it; but enough has been said upon that part. If the reader choose carefully to look over the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters of that Epistle, and to compare what each of us have said upon it, he may be better enabled thereby to judge of the meaning, than by any thing that can be farther advanced upon the subject.

Mr. B. thinks that "faith itself is not called *obedience*, but that obedience is the *fruit* of faith." (p. 53.) That faith is productive of obedience, is readily allowed; but I also apprehend, that faith itself is so called. Unbelief, in our first parent, was the root of all the evil which followed after it; yet unbelief was itself an evil; so it is supposed, that faith is not only the root of evangelical obedience, but is an instance of obedience itself. These thoughts are founded upon such phrases as *obeying the truth*, *obeying the gospel*, &c.* which, I suppose, mean a real believing it, and falling in with its grand designs.

These passages were quoted before, to which Mr. B. makes no other reply than by barely asserting, that "they none of them prove faith to be an act of obedience, but only show that obedience is the fruit of faith," (p. 53.) Obeying the gospel, in Rom. x. 16. is supposed, by the inspired penman, to be of similar import with *believing its report;* but it will hardly be said, that believing the gospel-report is not faith itself, but a fruit of it. "The passage," Mr. B. adds, "in Rom. i. 5. *By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith*, must, I think, to every common understanding,

* Rom. x. 16. vi. 17.

clearly appear to point out the grand design of the gospel-ministry, which is, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to bring men to obedience to Christ the object of faith, and to the doctrine of faith." Very true: and we apprehend that faith in the doctrine is that obedience which is required to the doctrine of faith; and that a rejecting of every rival and false confidence, and a being willing to receive Christ, that he may teach, save, and rule us in his own way, is that obedience which is due to him.

Obedience to the gospel, and disobedience to it, are, doubtless, to be considered as *opposites*. The former is true special faith, having the promise of eternal salvation;* the latter, therefore, cannot mean, as Mr. B. explains it, (p. 54.) the want of merely such a reverential regard to the gospel as a man may have, and yet perish everlastingly.

SECTION V.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S EIGHTH LETTER, ON THE CAUSES TO WHICH THE WANT OF FAITH IS ASCRIBED.

MR. B. here commences a new mode of opposition. Instead of an answer to those scriptures which were produced to prove that *ignorance*, *pride*, *dishonesty of heart*, and *aversion from God*, are assigned as the causes of men's not believing; he has presented us with some other parts of scripture, which he thinks ascribe it to other causes. Such a method of reasoning, I should think, can have but little tendency to convince a serious inquirer after truth. It will be natural for such an inquirer to say, 'Supposing Mr. B. to have proved what he has undertaken, namely, that the want of faith is to be ascribed to the sovereign will of God, and that alone; what

* Heb. v. 9.

are we to do with those scriptures which ascribe it to other causes?

One passage of scripture, under this head, is entirely passed over, (Luke vii. 29, 30.) a passage too that was particularly recommended to the attention of the Baptists; and a number of others are but very slightly touched. All the answer that I can find to what was advanced between pages 47—52, of my treatise, is included in the following passage: "That human depravity, that ignorance, pride, dishonesty of heart, aversion to God, and the like, often prevent a sinner's *attending to the gospel;* (which the Holy Spirit useth as a mean to convey faith into the hearts of his people, for faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17.) and that these things are of a criminal nature is certain; but what then? Does this prove faith a duty? and the want of it a sin, for which man shall be damned? By no means: so far as human depravity prevails, man is criminal; and the things afore-mentioned prevailing are certain *evidences* of the person's being destitute of special faith: but to say that these things are an *absolute bar to faith*, as Mr. F. does, (p. 48.) is a great mistake; neither these things, nor a thousand worse things, if worse can be named, shall be an *absolute bar* to any elect soul's believing." (pp. 59, 60.)

To this it is replied, If the reader please to review page 48, of my treatise, he will instantly perceive, that I was speaking of what was a bar to *men's believing*, not to *God's causing them to believe*. Christ did not say, How can *God cause you to believe*, who receive honour one of another? but How can *ye believe?* It is granted, that *with God* all things are possible: but, if the pride and aversion of men's hearts be that which renders believing impossible *to them*, that is sufficient to decide the question in hand; and this was certainly the whole of my design. In page 47, the very page before that in which is the passage to which Mr. B. objects, I had said, 'We know that *blindness of mind* is not such an obstruction but what is overcome by the grace of God IN THE ELECT; but that being removed in the elect does not disprove, but imply, that it is a remaining obstruction to the rest." I suppose Mr. B. must have read this passage just before that on which his remark is made; how, therefore, he could so strangely mistake my meaning, I am at a loss to conceive.

Surely Mr. B. could not think the above a sufficient answer to that against which it is written. "Human depravity," he admits, "prevents a sinner's *attending to the gospel;*" but he will not allow that it hinders him from believing. By "attending *to* the gospel," I suppose he may mean something more than merely attending *upon* it; but yet he cannot mean any thing *spiritually good;* if he did, and allowed that human depravity prevented it, that would be giving up a main point in the debate. I suppose, therefore, he means no more than such an attention to the gospel as may be exercised without any real love to it, or desire after an interest in its blessings. But will Mr. B. pretend to say, that this is all that is meant in the passages to which I had referred? Did Christ barely tell the Jews, (John v. 44.) that they could not attend to the gospel who received honour one of another, and sought not the honour which cometh from God only? Would this have been *true*, upon Mr. B.'s principles? Attending to the gospel, in his sense of it, is what men in an unregenerate state *can* do; and that in the exercise of a proud spirit. Did the want of *an honest and good heart* keep the three sorts of hearers, in the parable of the sower, from attending to the gospel? So far from this, Mr. B. elsewhere informs us, that the stony-ground hearers "*cordially received the truth.*" (p. 19.) Though I think, in this matter, he goes too far; yet thus much is certain—that a mere attention to the gospel was not the thing wherein they were wanting. When Christ blamed the Jews, saying, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life;* did he barely mean, Ye will not give attention to the gospel? Surely not!

Mr. B. admits, that "pride, aversion to God, and the like, where they prevail, are certain *evidences* of a person's being destitute of special faith;" but denies, it seems, that they have any causal influence to prevent his believing. And yet, if there be any meaning in words, surely the fore-cited passages must convey the latter idea, as well as the former. When Christ told the Jews, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life;* did he mean, that their unwillingness was merely an *evidence* of their not coming to him, and not that which had any causal influence upon them to prevent their coming? Surely not!

As the above passage, which I have transcribed from Mr. B. is the only answer he has made to my Fourth Proposition, I cannot but consider it as unanswered. He has advanced something, however, of an *opposite* tendency, which I shall now consider.

It was affirmed that the want of faith in Christ is ascribed, in the scriptures, to men's *depravity*. Mr. B. thinks this position contrary to John x. 26. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;* which passage, he thinks, ascribes the want of faith to "*non-election.*" (p. 55.) To this I reply, On some occasions, Mr. B. would make nothing of such a term as *because;* (p. 63.) and, were I to follow his example, I might say, It means no more than this: "Your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain *evidence* that you are not of my sheep." No complaint could justly be made, if the matter were left here: especially as the above are the very words of Mr. Henry, which Mr. B. has quoted for a different purpose. But, waiving this, be it observed, the truth which they did not believe was, *that Jesus was the Christ.* If thou *be the Christ,* said they, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I have told you, and *ye believed not:* the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; but ye *believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* This text, therefore, if it prove any thing for Mr. B. will prove too much; it will prove that non-election is the cause of that which he acknowledges to be sinful; namely, a discrediting of *Jesus being the Christ.*

Farther: Though Christ's people are sometimes called his sheep, simply on account of their being given to him in eternal election, as in verse 16 of this chapter; yet this is not always the case. They sometimes bear that name as being not only elected, but called; as the *followers* of Christ; and thus they are represented in the context: I know my sheep, and am *known* of mine; they *follow* the Shepherd, for they *know his voice;* they *go in and out, and find pasture.* And in the next verse to that in question, My sheep *hear my voice,* and I know them, and *they follow me.* All those who looked for redemption in Israel, readily embraced Christ as the Messiah, as soon as they heard of him; they knew his voice, as soon as they heard it, and followed him: but others, though they were of the house of Israel, yet, not being the real people of God, re-

jected him as the Messiah, the great Shepherd of the sheep. *He that is of God heareth God's words;* ye therefore hear them not, *because ye are not of God.** There appears, to me, a great probability of this being the meaning of the passage.

But, suppose a being not of Christ's sheep, here, to mean the same as not being of the number of the elect; this can be no otherwise assigned as the cause of their not believing, than as we assign the absence of the sun as the cause of darkness. BECAUSE of God's forbearing to execute vengeance, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do *evil;* but no one, it is hoped, will think evil excusable on that account. See Dr. Gill's *Cause of God and Truth*, Part II. pp. 100. 222. Part III. p. 77. First Edition.

Mr. B. assigns man's *natural incapacity* as another reason of his not believing, and says, "Sacred scripture *every where* abounds with passages to this purpose." (p. 55.) Well: if this assertion can be made good, something will be effected to purpose. In proof of it, however, no more than *two* passages are produced; viz. John vi. 44. No man *can* come unto me, &c.—and 1 Cor. ii. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither *can* he know them, &c. It is true, if these *two* will prove the point, they are equal to two hundred: but it were as well not to speak of such great numbers, unless more were produced. To what Mr. B. says on both these passages, it is replied, If the term *cannot* will prove this their inability to be natural and innocent, it will prove the same of the inability of those who are in the flesh, and *cannot* please God, and of those whose eyes are full of adultery, and who *cannot* cease from sin. Mr. B. takes no notice of what was said before, on these modes of speaking; but, instead of that, puts us off with barely informing us, that "this is sufficient *for him;*" and with asking his reader, "Does not this seem to strike you at once, that our Lord is here representing man's natural inability?" (pp. 56, 57.)

Mr. B. thinks I am strangely inconsistent, in maintaining that man's inability consists wholly in the evil state of his heart, or *will*, and yet allowing it to be *total;* (p. 56.) and elsewhere seems to wonder greatly at the same thing. (p. 93.)

* John viii. 47.

I also might wonder, that one who professes to believe in the *total* depravity of human nature, should object in such a manner. Must not that inability be total, which proceeds from, or rather consists in, total depravity?

If by *total*, Mr. B. means *unable in every respect;* I grant I do not think man is, in that sense, totally unable to believe in Christ. But an inability *in one respect* may be so great in degree as to become total.* It is thus in things which relate merely to a natural inability. A man may have books, and learning, and leisure, and so may not, *in every respect*, be unable to read; and yet, being utterly blind, he is totally unable, notwithstanding. In respect of the inability in question, those that are in the flesh are totally unable to please God; and yet their inability lies wholly in the evil state of their hearts towards God, and not in his being so difficult to be pleased, that, if his creatures were to do all they ought to do, it would be to no purpose. Men, by nature, are totally unable to love God with their heart, soul, mind, and strength; and yet, as Mr. B. allows this to be their duty, he cannot say, their incapacity for so doing is natural and innocent. We consider men as spiritually *dead;* and we consider spiritual death as a *total* privation of all real good; and this we may do without considering them as destitute of such faculties as, if the state of their hearts were but what it ought to be, would infallibly discern and embrace things of a spiritual nature.

* When we say, the depravity of man is *total*, we do not mean that it is incapable of augmentation; but that it amounts to a total privation of all real good. The depravity of the fallen angels is total; and yet they are capable of adding iniquity to iniquity.

I would wish Mr. B. to remember, that a moral inability, whether virtuous or vicious, may be *as total* as a natural inability. And I would also beg him to examine, whether he can form a clear idea of a person being under a *moral* inability to perform any action which he *is*, and *always was*, *naturally* unable to perform? For instance, can he conceive of a man born blind, as having a violent and invincible aversion from light? I own, it appears, to me, inconceivable: and it seems equally absurd to suppose that sinners should be capable of *aversion* from a plan of salvation which was utterly unsuited to their *natural* powers.

SECTION VI.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S NINTH LETTER, ON PUNISHMENTS BEING THREATENED AND INFLICTED FOR THE WANT OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

IN proof of this point, reference was had to Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned.* This passage had been explained by Mr. Brine as only giving the *descriptive characters* of the saved and the lost. To prove the contrary, I produced a number of threatenings in the word of God, delivered against *sin*, in the same mode of speaking as the above passage is directed against unbelief. Mr. Button thinks, that these also are mere descriptive characters; and that, if the scriptures used no other modes of speaking, we could not justly infer, that the punishments therein threatened were *on account* of the crimes therein specified. (p. 62.) This is very extraordinary indeed. As though, from such a threatening as *God shall destroy thee, O thou false tongue*, we were not warranted to conclude, that falsehood is a crime, and the procuring cause of the punishment threatened! If this reasoning be just, it cannot be inferred, from the laws of England declaring that a murderer shall be put to death, that it is *on account* of his being a murderer. Neither could our first parents justly infer, from its being told them, The day ye eat of the fruit ye shall surely die, that it should be *on account* of their so eating!

John iii. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God.* In urging this passage, I had grounded pretty much on the term *because*. But Mr. B. produces another text of scripture, where that term is used, and cannot, he thinks, denote a procuring cause. (pp. 63, 64.) The passage to which he refers is John xvi. 17. *The Father himself loveth you*, because *ye have loved me*. To this it is replied,

Suppose a word, *in one instance*, be understood in a peculiar sense, is this sense to be urged as a rule of interpreting that word in other places? If it is, Mr. B. would be puzzled, notwithstanding what he said in p. 62, to prove that sin is the procuring cause of damnation. This is the method taken by the adversaries to the proper deity and satisfaction of Christ.

But, farther: I apprehend the term *because*, even in this passage, is to be taken in its proper sense, as denoting the ground, or reason, of a thing. The love of God has, (with great propriety, I think,) been distinguished into *natural* and *sovereign:* the former is God's necessary approbation of every intelligent creature, in proportion as it bears his holy likeness; the latter is his free favour, fixed upon his elect, without the consideration of any thing in them, or done by them. The one is exercised towards an object while that object continues pure, and ceases when it becomes impure: thus God loved those angels, when holy, who are now fallen under his most awful displeasure. The other, not being founded on any thing in the creature, removes not from its object, but abideth for ever. The propriety of the above distinction may be argued from the doctrine of reconciliation by the death of Christ. To be reconciled, is to be *restored to favour.* Now, the *sovereign* favour of God was not forfeitable; we could not, therefore, be restored to that: but his necessary approbation, as the Lawgiver of the world, was forfeitable; and to that we are restored by the death of Christ.*

The godly are the objects of God's natural love, as bearing his holy likeness. If any man *love me*, says Christ, he will keep my words, and *my Father will love him*, and we will come and make our abode with him. If ye *keep my commandments*, ye shall abide in *my love;* even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. And thus, in the passage referred to, The Father himself loveth you, *because* ye have loved me. All this may be affirmed, without making inherent qualities any part of our justifying righteousness, or in the least injuring the doctrine of God's sovereign, eternal, and immutable love to his elect.†

* The reader will remember, I am reasoning with those who *allow* of the love of God to elect sinners being sovereign and unforfeitable.

† See Mr. R. Hall's *Help to Zion's Travellers*, pp. 25—41.

Mr. B.'s expositions of divers passages of scripture are founded upon the supposition, that nothing more than an *external* acknowledgment of the Messiah was required of the Jews. Thus he interprets Luke xix. 27. *Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me,* (p. 65.) and John v. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.* (p. 85.) In reply to these interpretations, I might refer the reader to what was said before on the Second Psalm; namely, that if Christ had been a mere civil governor, or such a messiah as the Jews expected, then an external submission might have been sufficient; but not otherwise.

I seriously wish Mr. B. to consider the import of his own words, in page 85. "Supreme love to God," he says, "would have led the Jews to have embraced Christ as the Son of God, and the Messiah; but not to embrace him in a way of special faith." What is special faith, unless it is to embrace Christ in his *true* character, AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES? Surely, it is not a receiving of him under some representation in which he is not THERE exhibited. To receive him as the Messiah, is to fall in with the *ends* and *designs* of his mission; and these were the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners in a way that should abase their pride, and destroy their idols. Nothing short of this can, with any propriety, be called a receiving him as the Messiah. I believe the scripture knows nothing, and makes nothing, of any thing else. *He came to his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.** No intimation is here given, that there is a third class of people, who neither receive Christ spiritually, nor reject him. According to the New Testament, they who received him were true Christians; and they who heard the gospel, and were not true believers, received him not.

Mr. B.'s remarks upon 2 Thes. ii. 10—12. conclude his Ninth Letter. (p. 65.) Notwithstanding what he has there said, I continue to think that sinners are culpable for *not receiving the love of the truth.* Mr. B. supposes, that their not receiving the love of the truth, is only mentioned as an *evi-*

* John i. 11, 12.

dence of their being the non-elect; though he, at the same time, explains God's sending them strong delusions, as a giving them up to *judicial* blindness. But it ought to be remembered, that God does not give men up to *judicial* blindness because they are not elected, nor merely from the "sovereignty of his will;" but as a punishment of former sins. I would therefore ask, What is the sin for which the persons in the text are thus punished? The apostle himself answers, *Because they received not the love of the truth.*

Farther: I cannot grant, that a not receiving the love of the truth *is* an *evidence* of non-election; since it is true of the elect while unbelievers, as well as of the non-elect.

In the punishing of sinners in this life, God frequently adapts the nature of the punishment to that of the crime. Of this the text in question is an awful illustration. Because men *believe not the truth*, God sends them a strong delusion, that they may *believe a lie;* and, because they have pleasure in *unrighteousness*, he suffers them to be deceived with all deceivableness of *unrighteousness*.

SECTION VII.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S TENTH LETTER, ON SPIRITUAL DISPOSITIONS.

BEING about, in my former essay, to prove spiritual dispositions incumbent on men in general, I thought it best, at entering upon that subject, to express my own ideas of the term *spiritual*. It appeared, to me, that, when applied to the dispositions of the mind, it always signified TRULY HOLY, in opposition to *carnal*. At the same time, I supposed my views on this subject might not be universally granted. I never meant, therefore, to lay them down as the *data* of the argument; but proposed, rather, to proceed upon undisputed principles. On

that account, I passed over this part of the subject without dwelling upon it; which Mr. B. calls "giving it up." (p. 70.) The criterion, as he acknowledges, by which it was proposed to judge of spiritual dispositions, was *their having the promise of spiritual blessings*. This was the ground on which I all along proceeded; trying the matter wholly by scripture-evidence, endeavouring to prove, that *those things are required of men in general, to which spiritual and eternal blessings are abundantly promised*. But Mr. B. has passed all this over, and has only carried on what I should think an unnecessary dispute about what he calls "natural and spiritual holiness." Surely he could have but very little concern with that on which I grounded no argument; his business was to attend to that upon which the whole was rested. But, instead of fairly discussing the subject upon that ground, he has taken up the whole of his letter in finding fault with my definition of spiritual dispositions; though no other end is answered by it, that I can perceive, than to show that he is of one opinion, and I of another.

In one part of his letter, Mr. B. gave us some reason to hope, that he would have left this manner of writing, and have come to the argument: "I shall add no more," says he, "on this head; especially as Mr. F. soon gives it up, by saying, 'If this, (that is, the defining of spiritual dispositions to be such as are *truly holy*,*) however plain it may appear to me, should not be universally allowed, I may go upon a more undisputed ground." Mr. B. asks, "And what ground is this?"—He then answers himself, "Why, says Mr. F. 'the criterion by which I shall all along judge of what are spiritual dispositions, will be *their having the promise of spiritual blessings*.' Whether these dispositions be incumbent on carnal men, let us now inquire." (p. 70.) Thus far Mr. B. in his quotation from mine. Would not the reader now expect, that he was about to enter upon a

* I suppose it must be entirely by mistake, that Mr. B. has represented me (in p. 70.) as maintaining the distinction of "natural and spiritual holiness;" and as informing my readers, that this distinction "appears plain to me." I have ventured, therefore, to alter what he had inclosed in a parenthesis, to what I suppose he intended to write.

fair discussion of the subject, upon the fore-mentioned criterion, to which he could have no reasonable objection? And yet, strange as it is, he never touches the subject upon that ground; but, though he had said he "should add no more" upon the other, yet immediately returns, saying nothing but the same things over and over again.

When we come to Mr. B.'s remarks on the capacity of man in innocence for spiritual obedience, we shall take notice of what is here offered in support of a distinction of holiness into natural and spiritual. At present, I may reply to some other things included in this letter.

Spiritual dispositions were said to be such as were TRULY HOLY. Mr. B. finds great fault with this, as it might be supposed he would. And yet I see not wherein it differs from the Apostle's account of the *new man*, that it is created *after God* in righteousness and TRUE HOLINESS;* to which the same objections might be made as to the above. That God is *immutable* in his nature, Mr. B. will allow; and that his *image* must be the same, is equally evident. That which is created *after him*, must ever be the same, in one period as in another. If the image of God is not now what it was formerly, it must be owing to an alteration in the nature of his moral perfections. There cannot be two essentially different *images* of the same divine *original*.

Farther: It was said, 'Whenever applied to the dispositions of the mind, *spiritual* stands opposed to *carnal;* and that, in the criminal sense of the word.' Mr. B. remarks this as a mistake; "for," says he, "*spiritual*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14. is opposed to *natural*. The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the *Spirit* of God," &c. (p. 67.) But, I apprehend, that the word "natural," (ψυχικος) in the text, is of the same import with carnal. To say that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, is equal to saying, that the carnal man receiveth them not; or he, who, whatever be his acquisitions in science, is under the influence of that corrupt nature which we all derive from Adam. Having nothing in him which is *truly good*, nothing correspondent with divine truths, all his vain labour and toil about those truths is to as

* Ephes. iv. 24.

little purpose as that of the men of Sodom about Lot's door. This, I take it, is the purport of Mr. B.'s quotation from Calvin. (p. 58.)

Depravity, though it is, strictly speaking, no part of our *nature;* yet is become natural, as it were, to us; and hence it is common for us to call a carnal, unconverted state, *a state of nature;* and the scripture speaks of our being *by nature* the children of wrath. A state of nature, in this use of the term, is evidently put, not for the state of man as *created*, but as *fallen.* And respecting the text in question, it does not appear probable, that the Holy Spirit would have here used a term, to have expressed the nature of man in its purest state, which he every where else, when applying it to the dispositions of the mind, uses to express a state of abominable iniquity.*

Dr. Gill says of the law, that "it requireth *spiritual* service and obedience." This I quoted before, supposing it expressive of my own sentiments; but Mr. B. assures me I am mistaken, and that Dr. Gill meant no such thing. By "*spiritual* service and obedience," it is said, he meant "a serving it with our minds; a worshipping God in spirit and in truth; a loving it with all our hearts and souls; as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty." (p. 71.) What was Dr. Gill's meaning I cannot tell; nor is it worth while to dispute about it, as the opinion of the greatest uninspired writer is not decisive: otherwise I should think he had no such distinctions in his mind as Mr. B. imputes to him. But, be his meaning what it might, there certainly is no difference between worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and the exercise of "spiritual principles and dispositions, such as flow from Christ Jesus." Suppose we follow Mr. B. in his distinction of holiness, into natural and spiritual; and of spirituality, into legal and evangelical: a worshipping of God in spirit and in truth must belong to the latter, and not to the former. It must be not only spiritual, but "evangelically spiritual;" for Christ is speaking of *true worshippers* under the *gospel*-dispensation; and they are said to be such whom *the Father*

* See James iii. 15. Earthly, SENSUAL, devilish; and Jude 19, SENSUAL, having not the Spirit.

seeketh to worship him. See John iv. 23, 24. The above distinctions appear, to me, to be more curious than just; but, be they ever so just, they will not furnish us with an answer to the argument upon the fore-cited passage.

If I understand what Mr. B. means by a spirituality which is different in nature from that which is evangelical; it is what is so called, not on account of its *nature*, but of the *subject* over which it extends; viz. the *spirit*, or *mind*, of man. But he should have considered, that, when the law is called *spiritual*,* (which it is only in one passage,) it is not in opposition to *corporeal*, but to *carnal;* just as the principle of holiness in the hearts of believers, or the *spirit*, is opposed to the *flesh*. This was noticed before, to which Mr. B. has made no reply.

"According to Mr. F. it is said, there is no alteration made in religion by the interposition of Christ to be incarnate, and his mediation; no change in the abolishing of the old covenant and the establishment of the new; no alteration in the nature of our obedience." (p. 73.) I hope the enclosing of this passage in reversed commas, and ascribing it to me, was without design. The passage was taken, by Mr. B. from Dr. Owen *on the Spirit*, p. 461. He has given us it at large, in p. 68 of his remarks. Dr. Owen delivered it as containing the sentiments of those against whom he was writing, who held the gospel to be only a sort of new edition of the law of nature. I must do myself the justice, however, to deny their being my *sentiments*, any more than my words. I have acknowledged the contrary, in p. 119. Nor are they so much as *consequences* deducible from any thing I have advanced. Mr. B. might, with equal propriety, go about to prove a difference between the principles of the Old and New-Testament saints; since the religion under the law is different from that under the gospel, though they agree (as Dr. Owen, in the same passage, observes) in their "Author, Object, and End." 'No:' Mr. B. will reply, 'these are, doubtless, the same.' Then we might retort, in his own mode of reasoning, 'If so, "there is no change made by abolishing the Mosaic dispensation; no difference between that and the gospel-dispensation; and no alteration thereby made in religion."'

* πνευματικος. Rom. vii. 14.

But Mr. B.'s arguments and objections upon this subject will be considered more particularly in the two following sections.

SECTION VIII.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S ELEVENTH LETTER, ON THE STATE OF MAN IN INNOCENCE; WHETHER HE WAS INCAPABLE OF DOING THINGS SPIRITUALLY GOOD.

UPON this single point of Adam's incapacity to do things spiritually good, Mr. B. rests almost all his arguments. He seems very desirous of taking this matter for granted, and actually does take it for granted, in various places; arguing and exclaiming upon the supposition of this sentiment being true, though he knows that will not be granted him. Hence, his answer to my reply to the objection on the necessity of a divine principle in order to believing. (p. 94.) If I held Mr. B.'s sentiment in this matter, then I should not be able upon that ground to establish my own! That is the amount of what he has there advanced. Hence also, his exclamation of my imputing *cruelty* to the Holy One; (pp. 56. 88. 95.) that is, that it would be "cruel and shocking for God to require that which is beyond the powers of man in his present or primitive state." I grant it; but that is what I never affirmed. If our principles are charged with absurdity, they should be proved to be inconsistent with *themselves*, or with some *allowed* principle, and not barely with those of our opponents.

I can see no force in the quotation from Mr. Brine; (p. 57.) wherein a *cannot* and a *will not*, in respect of coming to Christ, are said to be distinct things, unless this sentiment is first taken for granted. "We *cannot* come to Christ," he says, "as we are destitute of a principle of life; and we *will not*, as we are the subjects of vicious habits." Now, I would ask, what is the want of a principle of life, but the want of a holy bias

of mind to glorify God? And this is no otherwise a different thing from aversion of heart from him, than as a negative evil differs from one that is positive. The want of a principle of honesty in an intelligent being is no excusable thing, any more than positive villainy. I know of no answer that can be made to this way of reasoning, but by maintaining that a principle of life is something different from a principle of uprightness towards God; something different, in its nature, from what man, in his most upright condition, could possess. If this were asserted, I should no otherwise reply, than by asking for *proof*. In the above argument, this sentiment is assumed as if it were a truth allowed on both sides; whereas that is not the case. Supposing the notion of Adam's incapacity to do things spiritually good were a truth; to take it for granted in such a manner as this, is contrary to all fair reasoning. It is no other than begging the question. But I am not yet convinced that the thing itself is true; and, if the foundation is bad, the superstructure must fall.

Two questions here require a discussion; viz. What evidence has Mr. B. produced in support of this his favourite hypothesis? and, What has he done towards overturning the arguments for the contrary?

I. What evidence has Mr. B. produced in support of this his favourite hypothesis? The subject we are now discussing is of a *fundamental* nature, in respect of the main question between us. It is the corner-stone upon which the whole fabric of Mr. B.'s scheme is founded: we have reason to expect, therefore, that this should be well laid in solid, scriptural evidence. However some truths may be more fully revealed than others, I should think I ought to suspect that system whose first and fundamental principles are not well supported.

Let us examine what Mr. B. has offered. He apprehends the phrases *new man—new heart—new spirit—new creature*, &c. imply this sentiment, and are inconsistent with that which he opposes. (p. 83.) To this it is replied, The whole force of this argument rests upon the supposition that the term *new*, in these passages, stands opposed to a state of primitive purity; whereas every one knows that the *new* heart stands opposed

to the *stony* heart; and the *new* man to the *old* man, which is *corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.**

Farther: Mr. B. thinks this sentiment supported by a passage in Rom. vii. 6. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in *newness* of spirit, and not in the *oldness* of the letter." (p. 73.) But his sense of the passage, if it prove any thing for him, will prove too much. He maintains that spiritual dispositions are a conformity *to the law*, though not to the law *only;* (p. 68.) but the apostle says, they were *delivered from* the law of which he speaks. Yet Mr. B. will not say that we are, by grace, delivered from all obligation to the requirements of the moral law. To suit his sentiments, therefore, it should rather have been said, we serve *partly* in newness of the spirit, and *partly* in the oldness of the letter.

Whether "the oldness of the letter" be here to be understood of the manner in which the converted Jews used formerly to worship God; tenaciously adhering to the *letter* of their ceremonial law, instead of entering into its *spirit*, or design, and of worshipping God in *spirit* and in truth; or whether it mean the moral law, in its particular form of a covenant of works; (which seems to agree with the scope of the place;) it certainly does not mean that for which Mr. B. produces it. The "oldness of the letter," in which they once served, is not here put for that way of serving God which was exercised in a state of *innocence*, but in a state of *unregeneracy*. It was *when they were in the flesh*, (v. 5.) that this sort of service was carried on, to which the other is opposed. It must be such a sort of service, therefore, as could have in it no *real conformity to the law;* seeing they that are in the flesh cannot please God; the carnal mind is enmity against God; is not *subject to the law of God*, neither indeed can be.

It is very common for Mr. B. to apply that which is spoken of man as now born into the world, to man in a state of innocence. Thus he has applied a passage in Dr. Owen. (p. 81.) The Pelagian figment, that "what we have by nature, we have by grace, because God is the author of nature," means what we have "by *natural propagation;*" as the Doctor himself explains it, as we are now born into the world.†

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Ephes. iv. 22—24. 2 Cor. v. 17.

† *Owen on the Spirit*, p. 452.

I do not recollect any other passages of *scripture* on which Mr. B. has pretended to ground his fundamental principle; *fundamental* I call it, because, as was said before, it lies at the foundation of all his other principles wherein we differ. I wish Mr. B. and the reader seriously to consider whether the above passages convey such a sentiment; whether they can fairly be applied to the support of it; and, if not, whether that which lies at the foundation of his hypothesis, has *any* foundation in the word of God.

But Mr. B. though he has not, that I recollect, produced any other *scriptural* evidence for the sentiment in question than what has been noticed, yet has attempted to argue the matter out by *reason*. I had said, "It appears, to me, that the *scripture* knows nothing of natural holiness, as distinguished from spiritual holiness; that it knows of but one kind of real holiness, and that is a conformity to the holy law of God." In answer to this, Mr. B. does not pretend to inform us where the *scripture* does make this distinction, or from what parts of it such a distinction may be inferred; but only asserts, that "there is a difference," and goes about to inform us wherein that difference consists. (pp. 67, 68.) Let us now attend to what is there advanced. The sum of the supposed difference is made to consist in *three* things.

1. "The one was possessed by Adam in innocence, and would have been conveyed, by natural generation, to his posterity; the other we derive from Christ, by the influence of the Holy Spirit." Answer: This does not prove them to be of a different nature, but merely to spring from different *causes*, and to flow through different *channels*. Man, in innocence, enjoyed the approbation of his Maker; so do believers, as justified in Christ's righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. *Divine approbation*, in itself considered, is the same thing in the one case as in the other; but the means by which it is enjoyed are very different.

2. "Natural holiness consists in conformity to the holy law of God; spiritual holiness, to the law and gospel too." Answer: That all holiness is a conformity to some law, or rule of action, given by God to his creatures, is certain; and, if spiritual holiness is a conformity to the gospel in something wherein it is not a conformity to the moral law, then the gos-

pel must, after all, be a *new law*, or a *new rule of action*. But what necessity for this? "If the pure and holy law of God requires every man cordially to receive and heartily to approve of the gospel;" (as Mr. B. in p. 49, says it does,) then what room is there for the above distinction? A cordial reception and hearty approbation of the gospel is the very essence of conformity to it.

3. "Natural holiness was liable to be lost; but spiritual holiness never was liable to, never was, never can be, lost." Answer: This proves nothing to the point, unless the reason why spiritual holiness cannot be lost is owing to its *nature*, or *kind*, and not to the promise and perpetual preservation of the Holy Spirit. A principle the same in nature, may be produced in one subject, and left to the conduct of that subject to preserve it in being; while, in another subject in different circumstances, its existence may be infallibly secured by the promise and power of God. It is generally supposed, that the elect angels were *confirmed* in their state of original purity. Supposing this to have been the case, that confirmation, though it rendered their holiness, like that in believers, inamissible, yet it did not, in the least, alter its *nature*. It had not been a confirmation, if it had. Nor is there any reason, that I know of, to conclude, that the holiness in the elect angels was of a different nature from that which originally existed in those who fell. I have no notion of any principle in my soul that is, in its own nature, necessarily immortal. My experience teaches me, that I should as soon cease to love Christ, and the gospel, and every thing of a spiritual nature, as Adam ceased to love God, were it not for the perpetual influence of his Holy Spirit.

That none of the above differences make any thing in proving the point, is equally evident from Mr. B.'s *own principles*, as from what has been now alleged. He supposes spiritual holiness, or the holiness which is in believers, to be a conformity to the *law*, though not to the law *only*. Very well; *so far*, then, as spiritual holiness is a conformity to the law, it is, and must be, the same, in nature, as what he calls natural holiness; and yet they differ in all the circumstances above-mentioned. That *conformity to the law*, of which believers are now the subjects, and which must have been incumbent upon them

while unbelievers, is "derived from Christ as their head, and comes by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and not by natural generation;" neither "can it ever be lost," so as to become totally extinct. These are things, therefore, which do not affect the *nature* of holiness; and so are insufficient to support a distinction of it into two kinds, the one essentially different from the other.

Upon the whole, I think, Mr. B. in treating upon this subject, has proceeded in much the same manner as when discussing the definition of faith. In order to prove that holiness in the hearts of believers is something *essentially* different, or different in its *nature*, from what was possessed by man in innocence; he proves, or rather asserts, from Dr. Owen, that it "is an EFFECT OF ANOTHER CAUSE, and differs in the OBJECTS of its vital acts; there being *new revelations* now, which were not before." (pp. 76, 77.) All this is allowed: and it proves what Dr. Owen meant it to prove; viz. that we are not, after the manner of the Socinians, to make Christianity a mere revival of the law of nature. It proves that there are "some differences," as he expresses it,* between the life of Adam and that of a believer; but it does not prove an essential difference in their principles; nor did the Doctor mean it, I should suppose, to prove any such thing.

SECTION IX.

THE CAPACITY OF MAN IN INNOCENCE TO BELIEVE, AND TO DO THINGS SPIRITUALLY GOOD, FARTHER CONSIDERED.

WE now proceed to the *second* question; viz. WHAT HAS MR. B. DONE TO OVERTURN THE ARGUMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT, WHICH HE HAS UNDERTAKEN TO ANSWER? Some things he has

* *Owen on the Spirit*, p. 241.

passed over: he has said nothing, for instance, to what was advanced on the case of Cain and Abel; or on the difference between an *essential* and a *circumstantial* incapacity in our first parents to believe in Christ. I had attempted to prove, that the spirit and conduct of Adam, in innocence, were nothing more nor less than a perfect conformity to the holy law of God; that the same might be said of Jesus Christ, *so far as he was our example;* and, consequently, the same of Christians, *so far as they are formed after that example.* In proof of the *last two* positions, several passages of scripture were produced. On these Mr. B. has made some remarks.

Psalm xl. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.* What Mr. B. says (p. 79.) of the *will* of the Father extending to Christ's laying down his life as a sacrifice for sinners, I think is true; but nothing to the purpose. I was speaking of Jesus Christ, *so far as he was our example;* but what have his sufferings, "as a sacrifice for sinners," to do in this matter? Was he designed herein to be *our example?* Surely not. If the moral law be allowed to be "herein included," that is sufficient. And, if this were *not* allowed, since Mr. B. acknowledges, "that the Lord Jesus Christ, throughout his life, yielded obedience to the moral law," and has pointed out no other obedience, *wherein he was our example*, than this;* the point is given up, and all the questions in pages 78 and 81 are to no purpose.

Jer. xxxi. 33. *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*, &c. Mr. B. thinks the term *law*, here, "includes *the law of faith*, or the gospel; and also what the apostle, in Rom. vii. 23. calls *the law of the mind;* and especially as the apostle, when he quotes the passage in Heb. viii. 10. uses the plural word *laws*." (pp. 80, 81.) The plural word *laws*, in scripture, and in common speech, signifies no more than the different *parts*, or *branches*, of the same law; and is of the same import with the word *commandments*. I think, with Mr. B. that each of the above ideas are

* It is true, Christ was our example in his conforming to *positive institutions;* but this is included in obedience to the moral law, which requires a compliance with whatever God shall, at any time, think proper to enjoin; and will hardly be supposed to require a *distinct principle* for the performance of it.

included: not, however, as so many *distinct laws* put into the heart. For God to *write his law in the heart*, is only another mode of speaking for giving us *a heart to love* that law; and if the law "requires a cordial reception, and hearty approbation of the gospel;" (as Mr. B. in page 49, owns it does,) then, in a fallen creature, to whom the gospel is preached, a heart to love that law must include a heart to embrace the gospel; and a heart to love the law and embrace the gospel, *is* the principle of holiness, called *the law of the mind.**

An argument was drawn from the term *renewed*, as applied to our regeneration. On this Mr. B. remarks, as follows: "I think, at the resurrection, the same body that dies will be raised; but I think the state in which it will rise will be more than *circumstantially*, it will be *essentially* different from that in which it was laid in the grave; except corruption and incorruption, dishonour and glory, weakness and power, natural and spiritual, are essentially the same." (p. 83.) So far from this making for Mr. B. one need not desire a better argument against him. He thinks, he says, that the *same body* that dies will be raised; I think so too, or it would not have been called a *resurrection:* let him only acknowledge that the *same*

* After Mr. B has acknowledged, that "the law of God requires a cordial reception of the gospel," it is somewhat surprising that he should reason, as follows:—"If the law commanded faith, in relation to Christ crucified, it must then acquaint us with Christ crucified. It would be an unreasonable law to enjoin an act about such an object, and never discover one syllable of that object to us." (p 92.) It certainly would be unreasonable to require faith without a revelation of the object; and, where that is not revealed, we do not suppose it incumbent. But, if the *gospel* reveal the object of faith, the moral law may require it to be embraced, Mr. B himself being judge. If the law cannot reasonably require faith towards an object which itself doth not reveal; then, what will become of his *natural* and *common* faith in a crucified Christ, which he allows is required by the law? Does the law *reveal* Christ as the object of this kind of faith, any more than the other? Mr. B. cannot say it does. The above quotation, I suppose, is taken from Mr. Charnock. I have not the *first* edition of his works, and so cannot follow Mr. B. in his references; but, if Mr. Charnock's meaning were what the connexion of his words, as introduced by Mr. B seems to represent, it is certainly contrary to the whole tenor of his writings; and I believe no such thought ever entered his heart, as to question whether faith in Christ were the *duty* of sinners.

principle that was lost is restored, or it would not have been represented as a *renovation;* and we are satisfied. Let him but allow this, and he is welcome to dwell upon as many differences, as to *causes* and *objects*, as he can find. If this be but granted, all that he can say besides cannot prove an *essential* difference. It is very extraordinary for Mr. B. to suppose that it can. That which is essential to any thing, is that without which it would not be that thing. If corruption, dishonour, or weakness, belonged to the essence of the body, then it could not be the *same body* without them. These cause a difference as to the circumstances and condition of the body; they do not, however, so alter its essence, but that it is *the same body* through all its changes.

What is here advanced does not suppose that "corruption and incorruption, natural and spiritual, are essentially the same." Doubtless they are different and opposite qualities; but the question is, Do these qualities cause an essential difference in the *bodies* to which they pertain? If any one were disposed to prove an essential difference between the principles of saints on earth and saints in heaven, he might easily accomplish his purpose, according to Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning. He might say, 'They are more than *circumstantially*, they are *essentially* different: the one are weak, the other strong; these are exercised in believing, those in seeing; these are attended with opposing carnality, those are free from all opposition. Now here is an essential difference; except weakness and strength, faith and sight, remaining impurity and perfect holiness, were essentially the same!'

If Mr. B. should reply, that he did not plead for an essential difference between the *body* when it dies and when it is raised, but between the *state* of the body at those different periods; I answer, Then what he has said is mere trifling, nothing at all to the purpose. His design was to illustrate an essential difference between the *principles* of man in innocence and those in believers, and not barely in the *state* and *circumstances* of those principles; otherwise there had been no dispute between us.

The only question, it was before observed, to which the whole ought to be reduced, was this, WHETHER SUPREME LOVE TO GOD WOULD NOT NECESSARILY LEAD A FALLEN CREA-

TURE, WHO HAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO HIM, TO EMBRACE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS WAY OF SALVATION? The arguments which were thought sufficient to establish this question in the affirmative, were urged in pages 39—41, and 81—83, of the former treatise. To this Mr. B. has made no other reply than the following: "Supreme love to God will lead a man to embrace any revelation God makes of himself; but it will not, it cannot lead a man to embrace what *God does not reveal.* Supreme love to God would lead no fallen creature to embrace Christ in a way of special faith, without Christ being revealed, and revealed in an *internal* manner by the Holy Ghost. There is no true believing without revelation, without evidence." (pp. 85, 86.) Special faith, then, it seems, consists in believing something which is not revealed *in the scriptures*, and of which there is *there* no evidence. Well: if this be special faith, we need have no farther dispute about it; for I shall agree with him, that it is what no man is in the least obliged to.

Mr. B. in the outset, the reader will remember, allowed, that a believing of our interest in the blessings of the gospel, was not essential to true faith; (p. 10.) and yet, what is here advanced cannot, one should think, proceed upon any other supposition. His view of the subject, so far as I understand it, supposes, that common faith, such as a man may have, and perish, consists in believing *no more* than what is *already* revealed in the Bible; and that special faith consists in believing *our personal interest in it.* But this being no where revealed in the scriptures, any otherwise than by giving descriptive characters, an immediate revelation from heaven becomes necessary to acquaint the party of his peculiar privilege, before he can believe himself entitled to it.

That there is an *internal* as well as an external revelation, is readily allowed; but, I apprehend this revelation to consist in the eyes of the understanding being enlightened; and that, not to discover any *new truth*, which was never before revealed, but that which was already sufficiently made known in the holy scriptures, and which nothing but our criminal blindness could conceal from our minds. See Ephes. i. 17, 18. I think with Mr. Brine, that "to imagine that God now affords such light as will enable us to make discoveries of truths not already

revealed to us in his word, is REAL ENTHUSIASM, and has nothing to support it in the holy scriptures."*

Perhaps, I shall be told, that Mr. Brine made an *internal revelation* the ground of an obligation to believe in Christ. I suppose he did, when engaged in *this* controversy; but when engaged with a *Deist*, in the piece referred to, he probably forgot what in other instances had escaped from his pen, and nobly defended the Christian religion from IRRATIONALITY OR ENTHUSIASM.†

A great deal of Mr. B.'s reasoning tends, in my opinion, rather to degrade a state of primitive purity than to exalt that in which we are placed through Christ. I cannot per-

* *Christian Religion not destitute of Arguments*, p. 44.

† It is somewhat singular, that Mr. B. should charge me with making it the duty of any man to believe without evidence. This nearly amounts to what others have asserted, that I make it incumbent on them to believe a *lie*. The definition of faith, which I have heretofore given, is the *belief of the* TRUTH. If truth and falsehood, then, are the same thing, the charge may be well founded; but not, otherwise. If a persuasion of a personal interest in the blessings of the gospel were what denominated us believers, there might be something plausible in Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning; but this *he* does not pretend to maintain. Dr. Withers appears, in some places, to maintain this idea: and considers *faith*, as generally used in scripture, to signify "either an *assent to the Bible*," as containing the history of our Lord, and other important matters: or else, denoting "the *knowledge*, the *assurance* of an interest in its present and promised blessings:" (p. 73.) and from pages 153 to 156, he presents us with a long list of scriptures, as if to confirm this second idea of faith; but which evidently only prove what I never thought of doubting, that believers may have a consciousness of their having passed from death unto life, and not that it is this consciousness which denominates them believers. Indeed, he himself tells us in a note, (p. 155.) that a man *may* be a believer without this consciousness. What is it, then, which constitutes him a believer in that sense which is connected with a title to eternal life? He will hardly assert, that every one who assents to the divine inspiration of the Bible is in a state of salvation. And as to an assurance of being interested in the blessings of the gospel, (supposing this were a just idea of faith,) he could not be ignorant that I never made it incumbent upon all who hear the gospel: but one should think a man must be a believer before he can be conscious of it, or of any thing, in him that is truly good, or possess any well-grounded persuasion of an interest in Christ; and, if so, such a consciousness, or persuasion, cannot be that which denominates him a believer.

ceive that he represents the latter to any better advantage than we do. All the difference is, that he seems to think meanly of supreme love to God, as if it were something vastly inferior to that of which Christians are now the subjects. Thus he tells us, from Mr. Charnock, "that a new creature doth exceed a rational creature, *considered only as rational*, more than a rational doth a brute." (p. 85.) True: but is a man in his primitive state to be considered *only as rational?* Does he not continue to be a rational being, notwithstanding he has lost his primitive purity? Did Mr. Charnock, in the place referred to, mean to represent man in a state of primitive purity, as being *merely rational?* "Adam, in a state of innocence,"* as Dr. Owen observes, "besides his natural life, whereby he was a living soul, had a supernatural life with respect to its *end*, whereby he *lived unto God*."†

SECTION X.

REPLY TO MR. B.'S TWELFTH LETTER, ON DIVINE DECREES, THE USE OF MEANS, PARTICULAR REDEMPTION, &c.

THE objection from *divine decrees* is, to all intents and purposes, GIVEN UP. I had said, "The destruction of Pharaoh was determined of God to be at the time, place, and manner in which it actually came to pass; and yet who will say, that he ought not to have taken the counsel of Moses, and let the people go?" To this Mr. B. replies, "But Pharaoh had an *express command* to let the people go; therefore he was un-

* *Discourse on the Holy Spirit*, p. 240.

† In a *Testimony* in favour of the principles maintained by the Norfolk and Suffolk Association, we are told, "he was, while he stood, an upright gardener." Can this be the image of God mentioned Gen. i. 27?

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doubtedly criminal for not doing it: so it may be said of the rest of the instances produced; and therefore these are nothing to the purpose." (p. 88.) I might ask, then, What would have been to the purpose? The very circumstance of an express command, so far from destroying the propriety of the above instances, is one thing that renders them in point. The question here was not, Is *faith a commanded duty?* (that was discussed elsewhere;*) but, CAN *it be such, consistently with the divine decrees?* I undertook to prove that it *could;* inasmuch as the compliance of Pharaoh and Sihon with the messages which were sent them, was a commanded duty, notwithstanding the divine decrees concerning them. Mr. B. on the contrary, undertakes to prove that it *cannot;* that to suppose faith in Christ a commanded duty, must clash with the decrees of God. Now, how does he prove his point? Why, by acknowledging, that, if the command be *express, it may be consistent with those decrees;* that is, in other words, by giving up the very point in question. If I understand Mr. B.'s mode of reasoning, it amounts to what is usually called reasoning in a circle. In the contents, it is intimated, that faith cannot be a commanded duty, *because it is inconsistent with the divine decrees;* in the page to which those contents refer, it is suggested to be inconsistent with the divine decrees, *because it is not commanded!* After all; if the thing itself were inconsistent, no command, however *express*, could make it otherwise.

Mr. B. here, and in several other places, allows, that men ought to *use the means*, and be diligently concerned about their eternal salvation; to *strive* to enter in at the strait gate, &c. (pp. 38—43.) He has said nothing, however, to inform us how this is more consistent with the doctrine of decrees, than an obligation to believe is. But, passing this, it is observable, that what one evangelist calls striving to enter, another calls *entering;*† and, indeed, it must appear very extraordinary, if men ought to *strive* to do that which they are not obliged to do. Farther: using the means of salvation,

* In proof that faith in Christ is *expressly commanded*, the reader is referred to p. 27—35, of the former treatise, and to Section II. of this.

† Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vii. 13.

waiting and praying for a blessing upon them, ought to be attended to either with the heart, or without it. If *without* it, it will be but poor *striving* to enter in at the strait gate; far enough from the sense of the passage just cited, which denotes such a striving as that of a person in an *agony*; if *with* it, this amounts to something spiritually good, and shall certainly terminate in salvation.

What our brethren can mean, in consistency with their own sentiments, by making it the duty of men to *use the means of salvation*, is difficult to say. Mr. B. will not allow it to be a bare attendance, but, "a diligent waiting, and seeking of spiritual blessings." (pp. 36—43.) And, in the exposition upon Isa. xlii. 18. *Look, ye blind*, &c. the purport of the exhortation is said to be, "that they (unconverted sinners) would make use of their external hearing and sight, which they had, that they might attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding of divine things" (p. 102.) But a real diligent use of means, always implies a true desire after the end. It is an abuse of language to call any thing short of this by that name. Men, continuing wicked, may attend what are properly called the means of grace; but they never attend them *as* the means of grace. It is impossible a man should use means to obtain that after which he has no real desire; but a wicked man has no real desire to be saved from that from which the gospel saves us. Using the means of grace, therefore, and *waiting* upon God, are spiritual exercises, and have salvation plentifully connected with them in the Bible. *Every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.** Many of our brethren who scruple to exhort sinners to things of a spiritual nature, will yet counsel them to *watch* at wisdom's gates, and *wait* at the posts of her doors; but these are as much spiritual exercises, as believing in Christ. Those who *watch* daily at wisdom's gates, *waiting* at the posts of her doors, are *blessed*. They shall *find* him whom they seek; and, finding him, they find *life*, and shall obtain *favour of the Lord* † The language of wisdom is, *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.*‡

* Luke xi. 10. † Prov. viii. 34, 35. ‡ Ibid. viii. 17.

It is true, in some instances, persons are spoken of, not according to what they do, but according to what they *profess* to do; and, after this manner of speaking, hypocrites are said to *seek* the Lord and to *delight to know his ways, as a nation that did righteousness.** That is, they did those things which are the usual expressions of a delight in God and a desire to seek his face, *as if* they had been a righteous people: but, as to the things themselves, they are, strictly speaking, spiritual exercises, and are constantly so to be understood throughout the Bible. That manner of seeking God which is practised by hypocrites, will hardly be pretended to be the duty of men in general; and, except in those cases, neither seeking God's face, nor waiting upon him, I believe, are ever used in the scripture for such an attendance on God's worship as a man may practise, and perish notwithstanding: it is certain, however, this cannot be said of a "*diligently* waiting, and seeking of *spiritual* blessings." To use our external hearing and sight, *that we may attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding of divine things*, is not "WITHIN THE COMPASS OF A NATURAL MAN." The *end* of every action determines its nature: to read and hear, therefore, with a true desire that we may attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding, are themselves spiritual exercises. In this matter I entirely coincide with Mr. Brine, that no unsanctified heart will ever pray to God for grace and holiness; but that this is men's *dreadful sin*, and justly exposes them to *direful* vengeance."†

If to this should be objected the words of our Lord, that "many will *seek* to enter in, and shall not be able;" I answer, What is there spoken respects not the present state, but the period *when the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door.*‡

The case of the man waiting at the pool of Bethesda has often been applied to that of an unconverted sinner attending the preaching of the gospel: but let it be closely considered, whether such an application of the passage be warrantable from the tenor of scripture; and whether the characters to whom it is thus applied are not hereby cherished in a

* Isa. lviii. 2. † *Motives to Love and Unity*, pp. 36, 37.
‡ Luke xiii. 24, 25.

thought with which they are too apt to flatter themselves; viz. that, for their parts, their hearts are so good, that they would fain repent, and be converted, but cannot, because God is not pleased to bestow these blessings upon them. No one can imagine that I wish to discourage people from reading or hearing the word of God. God's ordinances are the means by which he ordinarily works; and, whatever be their motives, I rejoice to see people give them an attendance. At the same time, I think we should be careful, lest we cherish in them an opinion, that, when they have done this, they are under no farther obligations. By so doing, we shall furnish them with an unwarrantable consolation, and contribute to shield them against the arrows of conviction.

Particular Redemption. I had said, "If it were essential to true, saving faith to claim a personal interest in Christ's death, the objection would be unanswerable." Mr. B. replies, "But he who has faith *has* a personal interest, whether he can claim it, or not; therefore the objection is equally unanswerable on this ground: for it is making it the duty of all to have that which is an undoubted evidence of a personal interest, whether they have that interest, or not; which appears, to me, very absurd and ridiculous." (p. 90.) Perhaps so: but, if the same spiritual dispositions which are bestowed by the gospel, are required by the law, (which Mr. B. has scarcely attempted to *disprove*, though he has said so much about it,) there can be nothing absurd or ridiculous in it.

The matter entirely rests upon the solution of this question, Does the scripture represent any thing as the duty of mankind in general, with which eternal happiness is connected? I only wish Mr. B. had fairly tried the matter by this criterion, and had been willing to be decided by the issue. There is scarcely a truth in the sacred scriptures capable of a clearer demonstration. This was the ground which Mr. B. declined in his Tenth Letter, (p. 70.) In addition to what was said from pp. 58 to 66 of my former treatise, I shall now only add as follows:—

I hope Mr. B. will allow that every man ought *to love God's law; do his commandments; do righteousness;* be of a *meek, lowly, pure,* and *merciful* spirit; and bear so much good will, surely, to *Christ,* as to *give a disciple a cup of cold water*

for his sake; at least, he must allow, he does allow, that men ought *not to be offended in him;* for he himself confesses, "they ought not to *despise*, if they cannot embrace him." (p. 96.) And yet these are all evidences of an interest in Christ and eternal blessedness.*

Mr. B. farther objects, that I "make faith warrantable and incumbent, where there is an *impossibility*." (p. 90.) Well: whenever Mr. B. can find a man, or a body of men, whose salvation he can be assured is impossible; he is welcome, from me, to assure them they have no warrant, and are under no obligation, to believe in Christ. In some sense, the salvation of every sinner is *possible:* as no one knows what will be his end, every man, while in the land of the living, is in the field of hope. And that was all I meant by *possibility*, in pp. 133, 134. Mr. B. allows, that, "inasmuch as we *know not* who are, and who are not the elect, it is the duty of every one, where the gospel of salvation comes, to be concerned, seek, inquire," &c. (p. 88.) But what solid reason can be given for the consistency of this, which will not equally apply to the other? If it be said, These are things *expressly* commanded; I answer, This is allowing, that, IF *faith in Christ is expressly commanded, it may be consistent with the subject in question:* which is giving up the point.

But farther: Though I admit that the salvation of some men is *impossible*, it is *certain* that they will perish; yet I conceive it is not such a kind of impossibility as to render exhortations to believe in Christ inconsistent. It is no otherwise impossible for them to be saved, than it was for Sihon, king of the Amorites, to have enjoyed the blessings of a peace with Israel. If there is an *infinite* worth and fulness in the sufferings of Christ, in themselves considered;—if the particularity of redemption does not consist in any want of sufficiency in the death of Christ, but in God's sovereign purpose to render it effectual to the salvation of some men, and not of others; and in Christ's being the covenant-head and representative of some men, and not of others;—then the matter must be supposed to rest upon the same footing with all the rest of the

* Psa. cxix. 165. Rev. xxii. 14. 1 John ii. 29. Matt. v. 3—9. Mark ix. 41. Matt. xi. 6.

divine purposes. And, as it was the duty of Sihon to have accepted the message of peace, and to have trusted in the goodness of him by whose order it was sent him, notwithstanding the purpose of God concerning him; so it may be the duty of every sinner to accept of the message of peace which is sent him by the preaching of the gospel, and trust in Christ for the salvation of his soul.

Objections equally plausible might be made to that case, as to this. One might say, 'What end could be answered by a message of peace being sent? Peace was not ordained for him, but destruction; and his country was previously assigned to Israel for a possession: for him, therefore, to have received the message of peace, and trusted in the goodness of the God of Israel, would have been trusting in an impossibility.' If told, the purposes of God are a great deep, which we cannot fathom; that, if we knew the whole system, we should see it otherwise; that there was no *natural* impossibility in the affair, no *such* impossibility as to cause any inconsistency in it; and that, in the present state, we must take the *revealed*, and not the secret, will of God for the rule of our duty; he might have replied, like Mr. B. "True: but God's secret will is the rule of his conduct to us; and surely he has not decreed, by giving Sihon up to hardness of heart, to leave him destitute of a right spirit, and then punish him for the want of it: this would be *cruel* and *shocking!*" (p. 88.)

After all that Mr. B. has said, it is evident, from the above manner of speaking, that he does, in fact, make the decrees of God rules of human action; and herein lies a considerable part of the difference between us. We believe the doctrine of divine predestination as fully as he does, but dare not apply it to such purposes.

SECTION XI.

REPLY TO MR. B 'S THIRTEENTH LETTER, ON THE TENDENCY OF THESE PRINCIPLES TO ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINES OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY, DIVINE GRACE, THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, &c.

I HAD observed, that the sentiment I opposed, as well as that which I attempted to establish, "represented man as utterly *unable* to do things SPIRITUALLY GOOD; but then it made THAT inability to be no part of his depravity, but altogether innocent in its nature." Mr. B. quotes this passage; not, however, as I wrote it, but very differently, in sense as well as in words, and then finds fault with that which he himself had inserted. (p. 96.) I never imagined that he would maintain men's aversion from all "moral good" to be innocent, nor even their *aversion* from spiritual things; though I did not suppose he would have allowed that aversion to make any part of their *inability*. Mr. B. complains of being injured, in that he is represented as maintaining the inability of man to things spiritually good to be altogether innocent. What I affirmed was, that "the sentiment, when it spake *consistently* with itself, did so." I think so still; for it appears, to me, an inconsistency for a man to be "both naturally and morally unable" to come to Christ. Something has been said upon this subject already, in the note, p. 204. but, as this is a subject on which Mr. B. frequently insists, let us examine it more particularly.

In the first place: Supposing men's ability to do things spiritually good to be partly natural, and partly moral; then, after all, it must follow, that they are, *in part*, to blame for their non-compliance with those things; and so, consequently, the contrary must, *in part*, have been their duty. That this sentiment follows from the position of Mr. B. is certain; but whose cause it will subserve, I cannot tell: it seems to suit

neither. Mr. B. beyond doubt, means, all along, to deny every thing spiritually good, being either *in whole* or *in part*, the duty of carnal men. I have attempted, on the other hand, to maintain, that such obedience is not merely *in part*, but *fully* incumbent upon them. And, one should think, it either is incumbent upon them, or it is not; but the above position implies that it is neither.

Farther: I question if both these kinds of inability can possibly obtain in the same instance. Where there is, and always was, an entire natural inability, there appears to be no *room* for an inability of a moral nature. It would sound uncouth, to affirm of any of the brutal creation, that they are morally, as well as naturally, unable to credit the gospel. It would be equally uncouth, to affirm of a man in his grave, that he is unwilling, as well as unable, to rise up and walk.

That men are capable of *hating* spiritual things, nobody will dispute. But it is impossible that there should subsist any aversion from what there is an entire natural inability to understand. We cannot hate that of which we have no idea, any more than love it. A brute, be his savage disposition ever so great, is incapable of aversion from every thing superior to his nature to understand. The same may be said of any being, intelligent or unintelligent.

I may be told, perhaps, that a *poor* man may be of such a temper of mind, that, if he had a *natural* ability to relieve the distressed, he would still be under a *moral* inability. Be it so: it is not proper to say, he is morally, as well as naturally, unable to relieve the indigent. It might with truth be said, that he *is* morally unable to do such kind actions as are within his reach; and we may conclude he *would be* equally so to relieve the indigent, if his wealth were to increase. But this does not prove that moral inability can exist without natural ability. Besides, the inability of the *poor* man to relieve the distressed, is not, *in every respect*, total; and so is not of equal extent with that pleaded for in carnal men, as to the discernment of spiritual things. No man, however poor, is destitute of those faculties and powers of mind by which generous actions are performed. It is impossible, perhaps, to find a man naturally unable, in every respect, to do good, in some way or other, to his fellow-creatures: or, if a man of that description

could be found, he must be utterly void of reason; and, in that case, he cannot be said to be morally, as well as naturally, unable to do good.

Those who possess great natural ability are capable of being the subjects of greater moral inability and guilt, than others whose capacities are less. It is not in some men's power to be so wicked as others. And where there is, and always was, an *entire* natural incapacity, there is no place for an incapacity of a moral nature, *in any degree*. Mr. B. denies that men either have, or ever had, any natural ability for the embracing of spiritual things. We reply, If so, they would be equally incapable of *rejecting*, as of embracing, them. The *aversion* of the human mind from things of that nature, I conceive to be a strong additional argument in our favour; for which argument my thanks are due to Mr. Button. The above observations may be considered as a farther reply to the quotation from Mr. Brine. (p. 57.)

Can Mr. B. seriously pretend to maintain, that his sentiments represent *human depravity* in an equal light with ours? It seems he wishes to have it thought so; but with what colour of evidence, it is difficult to conceive. We suppose men's aversion is so great, as to amount to a *total* moral inability; and so to render divine influence absolutely necessary. But Mr. B. expresses his surprise, that we should call this inability *total*, (pp. 56. 93.) It seems, then, he does not think that the chain of men's native aversion from God and spiritual things is strong enough to keep them from coming to Christ, without having something else in conjunction with it.

But, if this cannot be maintained, he seems certain of the advantage, however, in one respect. "We certainly," says Mr. B. "lay man much *lower* than he does:" and this, he thinks, has a tendency to abase his *pride*, while our sentiments tend to gratify and promote it. (p. 96.) It is true, Mr. B. does lay man *lower* than we do: but it is observable, that, so far as that is the case, it is not in the character of a *sinner*, but of a *creature of God;* not on account of what he has made himself, but on account of what God has made him: and if this is the way in which we are to

be humbled, it might be done still more effectually, if we were reduced to the condition of a stock or a stone.

In reply to what is said on the doctrine of *grace*, and the *work of the Spirit*, (pp. 1. 93. 97.) little more need be said in addition to the above. Though Mr. B. sometimes speaks of men's inability as being *partly innocent*, and *partly criminal;* yet, as was said before, it was manifestly his design, all along, to prove men *wholly* excusable in their omission of every thing spiritually good. But, suppose it were otherwise; suppose they were only *in part* excusable; if it be a more glorious instance of grace, and a greater exertion of divine influence, to save one who is partly innocent, than one who is entirely to blame; it must be upon this principle, that, in proportion as criminality is lessened, the glory of divine grace in salvation is increased; and, if so, then the most glorious display of grace that could be manifested in our salvation, must be upon the supposition of our being altogether innocent!

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, says Christ to his disciples, *say*, *We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.* Luke xvii. 10. From this passage two things are observable: First, That obedience to God cannot merit any thing at his hands. Secondly, the reason why there is no such thing as merit in our obedience is, that all the good we have done, or may do, is *commanded*, is our *duty*. From hence it follows, 1. That the very idea of *duty* excludes merit, and cuts off boasting. 2. That the more attached we are to our duty, as such, the more distant we are from all pretence to merit, or boasting. The very way to extirpate the notion of human merit is, to consider all which we do as being our *duty*. 3. That, if it were possible to perform any thing which does not come under the idea of duty, then would there be some ground for merit. If the foregoing observations be just, it scarcely needs asking, Which sentiment it is, that cuts off boasting; that of faith being considered as a *duty*, or the opposite?

Perhaps it may be said, in answer to this, that, when a man is enlightened by the Spirit of God, it is then his duty to believe. But I think, if it be not incumbent before, it will be

difficult to prove it so at all. In this case, the work of the Spirit upon the heart must constitute the ground of duty; and then it is necessary that the person should *know* that he is the subject of this work, before he can see it his duty to believe. But by what evidences can he obtain this knowledge? Surely not by his impenitency and unbelief; and yet, till he has repented and believed, he can have nothing better.

If it be as Mr. B. represents, the work of the Spirit must consist in giving us *new natural powers*. If we have no natural power to embrace spiritual things till we are regenerated, then regeneration must be the creation of natural power. And what this is different from creating a *new soul*, is difficult to determine. Be that as it may, the creating of natural power cannot be a spiritual exertion, any more than the creation of a leg or an arm; and so cannot be reckoned amongst the special spiritual operations of the Holy Spirit. Whatever *grace* there may be in it, it is no part of the grace of the *gospel;* it is no part of *salvation*. It is not any thing that became necessary through *sin;* for it is supposed that man was as destitute of it in his created, as in his fallen state. One should think, therefore, it can be nothing which is given us *in behalf of Christ*, *as mediator;* or for which we shall have to praise him in *that* character to eternity.

Among a catalogue of other bad consequences imputed to my sentiments, they are said to be "distressing to saints." (p. 105.) This, for aught I know, may be just. They certainly have a tendency to convince both saint and sinner of abundance of sin, which the sentiments here opposed make to be no sin. It is no wonder, therefore, that true saints, by discerning their great obligations, both before and after conversion, to love the Lord Jesus Christ, should now be greatly distressed in a way of godly sorrow. Looking upon him whom they pierced, they mourn, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. But this, so far from being brought as an objection, ought to be considered as a corroboration. That which tends to sooth and quiet the minds of men, by giving diminutive representations of the causes of reflection and grief, is not the gospel. The gospel gives *peace* which passeth all understanding; and this is consistent with the exercise of the most pungent grief: but that quietness of mind which

rises from a diminution of blame-worthiness, rather deserves the name of *ease*, than of *peace*, and is much more to be dreaded than desired.

It was acknowledged, in the former treatise, "that many who have dealt in addresses to unconverted sinners, have dabbled in Arminianism." Mr. B. from hence repeatedly represents me as acknowledging that they *tend* that way. (p. i. Pref. and p. 100.) This I must beg leave absolutely to deny. There is no such acknowledgment, nor any thing like it; but the very reverse. Mr. B. cannot be ignorant, that many who have maintained the doctrines of grace, have more than dabbled in Antinomianism; and yet that is no proof that the doctrines of grace are really of that *tendency*.

As to the use that is made of my concession concerning the *manner* of addressing sinners; such as "Come to Christ now, this moment," &c. (p. 99.) I might refer the reader for answer to the passage itself; yea, to that part of it which Mr. B. has quoted. Surely he had no reason to conclude, that I thought a believing in Christ was a matter that might safely be deferred. He professes to maintain, that men ought to be perfectly holy, in some sense or other; but does he ever say to his auditory, 'Be perfectly holy now, this moment?'

One remark more on this subject requires a reply. I had attempted to remove the supposed absurdity of addresses to *dead* sinners, by observing that we supposed spiritual death to be altogether a criminal affair. Mr. B. answers, from Mr. Wayman, "It was man's sin to destroy a *moral* life, but it is not man's sin that he hath not a *spiritual* one. It is God's eternal grace that gives life." (p. 102.) To this it is replied, this position requires a higher authority to support it than Mr. Wayman.* If we admitted this sentiment as true, then, it is granted, our manner of address to unconverted sinners would be inconsistent; but we deny it. In order to prove our conduct absurd, it should be proved to be inconsistent

* It is not man's sin that he *hath not* a spiritual one:"—If spiritual life be what we never had, then we cannot be said to be *spiritually dead*; for death is not a mere negative, but a privative idea. "It is God's eternal grace that gives life."—True; and is it not God's eternal grace that gives to a fallen creature a conformity to his *holy law?* and yet it does not follow from thence that it is not man's duty to have it.

with some *allowed* principle, and not barely with the principles of our opponents.

SECTION XII.

SOME SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS RECOMMENDED TO MR. B. AND THE READER.

THERE is great danger, in all disputes, of running to extremes. Mr. B. thinks my sentiments "the high road to *Arminianism*," (p. 100.) and perhaps to "*something worse*." (p. 2.) I am not convinced, at present, of their having any such tendency. However, it becomes me to watch against every thing that might lead me aside from the simplicity of the gospel, be that what it may: and I hope I shall so far take Mr. B.'s advice. I hope also, in my turn, I may be allowed, without offence, to suggest a few serious hints to the same end. Mr. B. seems to think all the danger of erring to lie on one side: (pp. i. ii. Pref.) it is allowed there is danger on that side, but not on that side only. In general, then, I wish Mr. B. to consider, whether his principles do not tend to lead him farther than he seriously intends to go? Particularly,

If in the course of his ministry, he avoids giving the carnal part of his auditory to understand that God requires any thing of them which is spiritually good, whether it will not be natural for them so to understand it as to reckon themselves not at all obliged to love GOD, *to be truly holy, to be the subjects of any internal religion whatever; and whether they do not, in fact, so understand it?* Whatever difference there is between these things in the opinion of the preacher, I incline to think, not one *hearer* in a hundred makes any account of it. They understand it of every thing which concerns the *heart*. The generality of those who would be offended with us for enjoin-

ing spiritual obedience upon our carnal auditors, would, I apprehend, be equally offended with Mr. B. were he to signify that they ought to worship God in *spirit and in truth*, or to *love* him with their whole heart. Were any thing of this sort delivered, and nothing added to explain it away, it is likely the preacher would be interrogated in some such manner as this: 'How can unregenerate sinners *love* God, or worship him *in spirit and in truth?* You might as well call to the dead to come forth, or bid people take wings and fly to heaven. Their business is to attend the means, and if God please to give them a heart to love him, well and good; but if not, to what purpose are all your harangues about what people *ought* to do? Cease this legal business, preach the doctrines of the gospel, and leave the Holy Spirit to do his own work.'

In the above, no respect whatever is had in a personal way to Mr. B. or any of his friends. What is written, is founded upon such facts as have fallen under my own observation; and, I suppose, that the same causes are usually productive of the same effects, in one place as in another.

Farther: It may be well for Mr. B. to consider, *while he professes to allow that men ought to do whatever was in the power of man in a state of innocence, whether his sentiments do not insensibly lead him to excuse men from every thing but what may be done by a wicked mind, without any true love to God, or regard for his glory?* Mr. B. when asked in controversy, 'Whether any internal religion is now required of men towards God, or not?' answers in the affirmative. (p. 72.) But is it a matter which his views of things would ever, of their own accord, lead him to dwell upon? I am glad to see the frankness with which he expresses himself concerning the law of God being *exceeding broad*. "If the principles I have advanced," says he, "contradict this truth, let them for ever be discarded." (p. 95.) Mr. B 's meaning, in this ingenuous sentence, cannot be supposed to amount to less than this—that, if he perceived his present sentiments to clash with the spirituality of the law, he would disown them; and, if he found them to have such a *tendency*, he would, at least, suspect them. Now, I desire, in this matter, to be determined by *facts;* and by facts that cannot fairly be disputed. I ask, then,

In what manner do Mr. B.'s sentiments lead him to EXPOUND SCRIPTURE? How has he expounded the Second Psalm, and the Sixth of Jeremiah? What has he made these passages to require, more than *external* obedience? Is it not the tendency of all he says concerning the addresses of Christ and his apostles to their carnal auditors, to reduce them to the capacity, not of a right spirit, such as man possessed in a state of innocence, but of an *apostate mind?* Are they not, all along, made to mean no more than what may be done without any real love to God, or regard for his glory? Is not such a sense put upon Isa. xlii. 18. *Look ye blind*, &c. as that its requirements shall be "WITHIN THE COMPASS OF NATURAL MEN, WHO ARE INTERNALLY DEAF AND BLIND?" (p. 103.)

This is certainly a serious matter; and I hope Mr. B. will seriously consider it. If he does indeed believe the law to be spiritual, and to require internal religion, it is hoped he will, on all proper occasions, acknowledge it, and not attempt to bring down the precepts of the Bible to the dispositions of an apostate creature; otherwise, people may be ready to say, he holds the spirituality of the law as some others do the doctrines of grace, who never think proper to mention them, except when an occasion offers to explain them away.

If any thing in the preceding pages should be thought unkind, or exceeding the liberty we are allowed to use with a Christian brother, I hope for Mr. B.'s forgiveness. I can truly say, If there is it is unknown to me. It has been my endeavour, all along, to make him feel nothing, except it be the force of truth.

Before I conclude, I would beg leave to recommend a few serious hints to the *reader*. Whoever he is, and whatever his opinion may be in reference to this controversy; let me entreat him to put one serious question to his own soul, *Dost* THOU *believe on the Son of God?* Let him remember, that nothing less than his eternal salvation or destruction hangs upon the answer; that the question *must* be answered, sooner or later; that there is no medium between being Christ's friend and his enemy; and that it is not taking this or the other side of a dispute, that will denominate any man a Christian. Neither let him evade the question, by answering, That he has already been acknowledged as a believer in Christ; is a

member of a Christian church, perhaps a preacher of the gospel, and has long been in the habit of taking this matter for granted, and of sitting in judgment upon other men, and other things. All this may be true; and yet things may issue in a dreadful disappointment!

But, supposing the reader a real Christian, still there is great reason for prayer and watchfulness. Reading controversies may be advantageous, or it may be hurtful; and that, according to the spirit with which it is attended to. Every man had need to read with some degree of judgment of his own: and yet, if he set out with a determination to receive nothing but what shall accord with his own present views of things, he is likely to derive no real good, and, perhaps, much harm. He may meet with what confirms him in his sentiments; and those sentiments may be on the side of truth: but, if he have such a determination, though his creed is right, his faith is wrong; especially if it lead him to despise others who think differently, and to glory over them, as being confuted. On the other hand, he may meet with that which contradicts his sentiments; he may reject it with abhorrence; and, in so doing, think his heart very much established with grace, so as not to be carried away with every wind of doctrine; and yet all may amount to nothing but a being *wise in his own eyes.*

We are never so safe, as when we go about these matters with prayer, fear, and trembling. The subject here discussed is not a mere matter of speculation: it enters deeply into our spiritual concerns, relating both to this life and that to come. It is a matter, therefore, that is well worthy of earnest prayer, and of serious and impartial attention. If truth is but sought in this manner, it will be found. *The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.*

A

REPLY

TO

THE OBSERVATIONS

OF

PHILANTHROPOS.

It may appear somewhat extraordinary, that the same sentiments should be liable to opposition from two gentlemen of such contrary principles as Mr. Button and Philanthropos. It may be less surprising, however, when it is considered, that there are certain points in which the most opposite extremes are known to meet. An attentive reader will perceive a great affinity in the tendency of their reasonings on various subjects. If I am not greatly mistaken, they both particularly agree in denying faith in Christ to be a duty required by the *moral law;* and in excusing the sinner, unless *grace* is bestowed upon him, in his non-compliance with every thing spiritually good.

As to the *spirit* of Philanthropos, he has treated me with candour and respect. Though I quite disapprove of many of his sentiments; and though I think he has written in some places (pp. 88. 92, 93.) in a manner bordering on irreverence; yet, so far as it concerns myself, what he has advanced has never, that I remember, "given me a moment's pain." He has examined with freedom what I advanced. I respect him for so doing. I can, with the less fear of offence, use a like freedom in return.

Complaint is made of the use of the terms Arminian, Calvinist, &c. (pp. 52—56.) When I have used the former of

these terms, I am not conscious of ever having used it as "as a term of reproach." As to calling P. or any other person, an Arminian; I never desire to affix to an honest man a name by which he would not call himself. For my own part, though I never mean to set up any man as a standard of faith; and though, in some things, I think differently from Calvin; yet, as I agree with him in the main, particularly in the leading sentiments advanced in the former treatise, and as it served to avoid unnecessary circumlocution, I have used the term Calvinist, and have no objection to being so called by others. Whether P. is an Arminian, or not, is of very little account with me; it is not very difficult, however, to discern the leading features of his scheme in the works of those who have chosen to be called by that name.

But complaint is farther made of the Arminian divines being misrepresented. (p. 52.) Though I have no better an opinion of Arminius's doctrine of the Spirit's work, as given us by P. (p. 53.) than I had before; and though I believe it would be no difficult matter to prove that the generality of Arminian divines have carried matters farther than Arminius himself did; (as P. seems in part to admit;)* yet I acknowledge, what I said on that subject, in the passage referred to, was too strong: though, at the time I wrote, I was not aware of it.

To what is said in p. 10. I have no material objection. What I meant was, merely to disown that any sinner was encouraged by the gospel to hope for eternal life, without returning home to God by Jesus Christ. The omission of part

* If I am not misinformed, the Remonstrants, in their *Apology*, maintained, that "that ought not to be commanded which is wrought in us; and cannot be wrought in us which is commanded; that he foolishly commandeth that to be done of others, who will work in them what he commandeth." Cap. 9. p. 105. And to the same purpose Episcopius; "That it is a most absurd thing to affirm, that God either effects by his power, or procureth by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things that he requireth of them." Disp. pri. 8. Thes. 7. These sentiments, if I understand them, amount to the same thing as "DENYING THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO ENABLE US TO DO OUR DUTY." The above passages are taken from Dr. *Owen's Display of Arminianism*, Chap. X.

of Isa. lv. 7. as also the mistake respecting the prayer of the publican, were altogether without design.

There are some remarks which, I think, are made merely for want of considering that those with whom I was in debate were professed Calvinists. Thus, in p. 30, I am corrected for taking for granted that which should have been proved. Had the controversy been with P. or those of his sentiments, the observation had been just; or, had I called any sentiment, which was professedly a subject in debate, a "gospel-doctrine," as P. has done; (p. 38.) perhaps the complaint had been made with greater propriety.

I need not have any dispute with P. concerning the *definition* of faith: for, though he tells his correspondent that I "do not suppose faith to include in it *confidence*," yet he knows I, all along, maintain confidence, or trust, to be incumbent on men in general. God ought, no doubt, to be trusted, or confided in, for the fulfilment of whatever he has *promised*, be that what it may. I acknowledged before, that "faith in Christ, as generally used in the New-Testament, was to be taken in a large sense; as including not only the belief of the truth, but the actual outgoing of the soul towards Christ in a way of *dependence* upon him." (p. 23.) My views of *trust*, or confidence, will be seen more fully in the Third Section of this Reply.

By what I said of believing the gospel-report, and of this report *extending* not only to general truths, but to the particular description of their intrinsic nature; I certainly did not mean, as P. has understood me, "that all poor sinners, who are brought to the enjoyment of salvation, must have the very same ideas of whatever God hath reported concerning Christ and his salvation; and this to the very same *extent*." (p. 17.) My intention was to prove, that a real belief of the gospel-report carried in it a belief of its *glory* and *importance*, and so included more than it was frequently supposed to do. Many persons, observing that people would avow the general doctrines of Christianity, and yet live in a course of sin, have hence concluded, that a belief of the gospel was no more than a man might have, and perish everlastingly. It was this opinion that I meant to oppose; and, by proving that a real belief of the gospel is a belief of its *intrinsic nature*, as well as

of its general truths, I suppose I proved what was there intended; viz. that it extends farther than the faith of any wicked man, let him have assorted his notions with ever so much accuracy.

There is a great difference between a want of ideas, through a natural weakness of intellect or lack of opportunity to obtain them, and a positive rejection of what God has revealed. There is an equal difference between a Christian of weak capacity believing the intrinsic excellency of the gospel, and "being able to *describe* it, or even to ascertain all the general truths of Christianity." The weakest Christian believes and lives upon THAT in the gospel, of which a wicked man, whatever be his intellects and advantages, has no idea. *We* ALL *with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* But *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.**

P. allows the necessity of believing the gospel; (p. 16.) and yet seems, afterwards, rather to wish to set this idea aside, and to place the essence of faith in *trusting*, or *confiding*, in Christ for salvation. (pp. 17, 18.) But shall we not talk without meaning, if we talk of confiding in Christ without respect had to something testified, or some *rule*, by which our confidence is to be directed? If we dispense with the *truth of God*, as the warrant and rule of our confidence, however it may become very extensive, and fit professors of opposite ways of thinking, it will be found, at the great day, no better than a building erected upon the sand.

As to the question, "To what *degree*, or *extent*, must a poor sinner believe the truth of the gospel?" (p. 16.) it is not for me to answer it. If I were asked, 'To what degree of *holiness* must a man arrive, in order to *see the Lord?*' I should be equally unable to reply. That men have different natural capacities and opportunities, is certainly true; and according to the different degrees of these are their obligations both to receive God's truth, and to exert themselves for his glory. That there is also great *contrariety* of sentiment, is equally true: and how far the mercy of God may extend, through the

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 4.

death of his Son, in passing over the errours of men's minds, or those of their conduct, is not for me to say; but I think it is our business to maintain a *rule* for faith, as well as for practice.

But, waiving lesser remarks, the substance of what is advanced may, I think, be reduced to the following heads:—Whether regeneration is prior to coming to Christ, as a cause is prior to its effect? Whether moral inability is, or is not, excusable? Whether faith in Christ is required by the moral law? and, Whether an obligation upon all those to whom the gospel is preached to believe in Christ, and the encouragements held out to them to do so, is inconsistent with a limitation of design in his death. On each of these subjects I shall make a few remarks.

SECTION I.

WHETHER REGENERATION IS PRIOR TO OUR COMING TO CHRIST.

THOSE writers, whose sentiments I made free to examine, generally maintain a distinction between the principle and the act of faith. I did not dispute this matter, but admitted it; and, upon those principles, endeavoured to prove the point then in question. P. greatly disapproves of this distinction, and asks "wherein the distinction lies;" and, where the scripture teaches us to make it. (p. 14.) The difference between a principle and an actual exertion was supposed to be illustrable by a principle of *honesty* being previous to an upright conduct: but P. thinks this will not answer the end, because faith is purely *mental;* it being *with the heart* that man believeth. Although this is true, yet I see not how it affects the matter. A principle of honesty is as necessary to a *purpose* to act uprightly, (which is a mental exertion,) as it is to the action itself.

It is not supposed, however, that there is a distinct princi-

ple wrought in the heart, which may be called a principle of *faith*, in distinction from other graces; but, rather, a new turn, or bias, of mind, previous to all acts or exercises whatsoever, internal or external, which are spiritually good. And if faith is an act of the mind at all; if, especially, it be taken for the soul's *coming* to Christ, as P. contends; then, unless *an evil tree can bring forth good fruit*, there must be a new bias of mind previous to such an act. Again, Coming to Christ, if it be a duty, (and P. will allow it is,) must be something *pleasing* to God; and if this may be done prior to the Spirit of God dwelling in us; then it should seem, notwithstanding what the scripture affirms to the contrary, that they *who are in the flesh* MAY *please God;* for every man is in the flesh, till the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.*

One should think, that not only scripture, but a common observation of the workings of our own minds, might teach us the need of a bias of mind different from that which prevails over men in general, in order to come to Christ. Whoever be the *cause* of such a bias, let that, at present, be out of the question: suppose it is man himself, still a turn of some sort there must be; for it will hardly be said, that the same thoughts, and temper of mind, which lead a man to despise and reject the Saviour, will lead him to esteem and embrace him! That a turn of mind is necessary to our coming to Christ, seems evident, then, from the nature of things; and, if so, our mistake must lie, if any where, in ascribing it to the Spirit of God.

Whether the first beginning of God's work upon the mind consists in giving us a *spiritual discernment*, whereby *spiritual things*, or the importance and glory of divine truth are discerned? or, Whether it consists in a divine energy attending the word itself, causing it to break in, as it were, upon the mind, and bear down every opposition before it? are questions which have each its difficulties. But, whatever difficulties might attend a discussion of these questions, and whatever might be the issue; it would very little, if at all, affect the *present* controversy. If it is said, It *does* affect it; for if the first beginning of God's work upon the mind is *by* the

* Rom. viii. 8, 9.

word, it must be by the word *believed:* I answer, First, That may be questioned. The word, it is true, must be *understood*, in a measure, in order to have any effect; but it is a question with me, whether a person must believe the gospel, before it can have any effect upon him. We know that truth frequently maintains a long struggle with darkness and errour, before they are overcome; during which time, it may be said that God has been at work upon the mind by means of his word: and yet that word cannot be said to be *believed*, till the opposition drops, and the soul becomes a captive; in other words, till the heart is brought to set seal that God is true. If it is insisted, that that degree of *conviction* which exists in the mind, while the heart remains unsubdued, is properly called *believing* the word, so far as it goes; I shall not dispute about terms, but shall, at the same time, insist, that it is not such believing as to denominate any person *a believer*. But, Secondly, P. insists, that true faith in Christ is something more than believing the divine testimony; that it is the soul's actual *coming* to Christ: now, if so, though the word should be allowed to be instrumental in the renewal of the mind, yet that renewal must precede believing, or the soul's application to the Saviour. So that, granting him all he can desire, it will not prove that regeneration follows upon believing, in his sense of the word.

The great question between us is this, WHETHER THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS THE PROPER AND EFFICIENT CAUSE OF A SINNER'S BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST; OR, WHETHER IT BE OWING TO HIS HOLY INFLUENCE, AND THAT ALONE, THAT ONE SINNER BELIEVES IN CHRIST, RATHER THAN ANOTHER? If this were but allowed, we should be contented. If the first beginning of God's work upon the mind is *by* the word, let it but be granted that it is by the *agency* of the Holy Spirit causing that word to be embraced by one person, so as it is not by another, and so to become effectual; and we are satisfied. If this is but granted, it will amount to the same thing as that which we mean by regeneration preceding our coming to Christ; since the cause always precedes the effect.

But if I rightly understand P. he leaves out the agency of the Holy Spirit in the act itself of believing; maintaining that the Spirit is not given till after we have believed. (p. 22.)

If there is any divine agency in the matter, it can be only a sort of grace which is given to men in common; and this can be no reason why any man believes, rather than another: it is the man himself, after all, who is the proper cause of his own believing. It is owing to himself, it seems, that the good work is begun; and then God promises to carry it on to the day of Jesus Christ.

I cannot but think this sentiment highly derogatory to the honour of the Holy Spirit, and contrary to the tenour of the sacred scriptures. In proof of this, let the following observations be duly considered:—

I. The scriptures not only represent salvation as being *through faith*, but they ascribe *faith itself* to the operation of the Spirit of God. Those who come to Christ are described as having first *heard* and *learned* of the Father, and as being *drawn* by him; nor can any man come to him, except it be *given* him of the Father. Nor can this *learning* be applied to the mere outward ministry of the word; for *all* who are thus *taught of God*, do not come to Christ. *Faith*, as well as love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, and goodness, is a *fruit* of the Spirit. We *believe*, *according to the working of his mighty power;* a power equal to that which raised our Lord from the dead. *Faith* is expressly said to be *of the operation of God.* We are not only saved *by grace through faith;* but even THAT *is not of ourselves:* IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD. If regeneration be brought about by any exertion of ours, it is not only contrary to all ideas of generation, (to which, undoubtedly, it alludes,) but also to the express testimony of scripture, which declares that *we are born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Those parts of scripture which speak of the instrumentality of the word in our sanctification, take care to ascribe all to the *agency* of the Holy Spirit. They who understand the gospel, and who are changed into the same image, are represented as so doing *by the Spirit of God.* Christ did not pray that the truth might sanctify men; but that God would sanctify them *by* his truth. If the word become effectual, it

* John vi. 44, 45. 65. Gal. v. 22. Eph. i. 19. Col. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 8. John i. 13.

is when it comes not in *word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.* If it bring about the *salvation* of those who believe, it is because it is *the power of* God to that end.*

II. The scriptures represent *all the great instances of conversion as effects of some peculiar out-pourings of the Spirit of God.* We may instance *two* periods; the time of the great conversions in the apostles' days, and the time of latter-day glory, yet to come. Of the *former* of these periods it was promised, *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing* IN THE DAY OF THY POWER. And again, *In that day will I pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.—In that day there shall be a fountain opened,* &c.† These promises were gloriously accomplished soon after Christ's ascension, when thousands of those who had voted for the crucifixion of the Messiah, became captives to all-conquering grace!

The Lord Jesus himself preached to these very people; yet, though he was the greatest of all preachers, he laboured in vain. They believed not his report. He was a root out of a dry ground in their eyes. How came they to believe the apostles, rather than him? To what cause can it be imputed, but to *the arm of the Lord being revealed?* To what cause can we ascribe their superior success, not only in Judea, but throughout the gentile world, except to the *Spirit being poured down from on high,* in consequence of Christ's ascension? Christ told his disciples that they should do the works that he did, and *greater* works than those, "because," says he, "I go unto my Father." Yes: hence it was that the Spirit of truth was sent, not only to comfort believers, but *to convince the world of sin.*‡

The *prayers* of the apostles and primitive ministers show, that their hope of success did not arise from the pliableness of men's tempers, or the suitableness of the gospel to their dis-

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. John xvii. 17. 1 Thess. i. 5. Rom. i. 16.

† Psa. cx. 2, 3. Zech. xii. 10. xiii. 1.

‡ Isa. liii. 1. xxxii. 15. John xiv. 12. xvi. 8.

positions; but from the power of Almighty God attending their ministrations. The weapons of their warfare, however fitted for the purpose, were *mighty* THROUGH GOD to the pulling down of strong holds. To GOD they sent up their earnest and united petitions, before they opened their commission. Meeting in an upper room, they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. And, afterwards, we find the apostle Paul requesting his Thessalonian brethren to pray for him and his associates in the work of the ministry, *that the word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified.**

The great accessions to the church of God in the *latter days*, are ascribed to the same cause. In the 60th chapter of Isaiah, after abundance of rich promises of a large and glorious increase, after the multitudes of conversions to Christ had been rapturously resembled to a *cloud*, and the *flockings* of doves to their windows, the whole is thus concluded; *Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch* OF MY PLANTING, THE WORK OF MY HANDS, THAT I MAY BE GLORIFIED. *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation:* I THE LORD WILL HASTEN IT IN HIS TIME. When the seventh angel sounded, and voices were heard, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*, the four-and-twenty elders immediately fell upon their faces, and blessed him who was, who is, and is to come, because he had TAKEN TO HIM HIS GREAT POWER, AND REIGNED.†

But, if the Spirit of God is not the cause why one sinner believes in Christ, rather than another, then he is not the cause why there are more believers at one period of time than at another. And, if so, to what purpose are the before-cited *prayers* or *promises?* As to the *former*, however strongly they speak of latter-day glory, and of *God's taking to him his great power, and reigning*, they are, after all, mere predictions of what *will* be, rather than promises of what *shall* be. The same may be said of the promises concerning the success of the gospel after Christ's ascension. As to the *latter*, to what purpose was it to *pray* for what they already had?

* 2 Cor. x. 4. Acts i. 14. 2 Thess. iii. 1. † Rev. xi. 15—17.

They had a gospel adapted to the condition of lost sinners; and as to divine grace, if any thing of that be necessary to a reception of it, their hearers are supposed to have had a sufficiency of that already bestowed upon them, otherwise it would have been a mockery to address them. Now, if things are so, might not the apostles have expected some such an answer to their prayers as was given to Dives? 'They have Moses and the prophets, yea, Christ and the apostles, let them hear them; I have given them grace sufficient already; I shall do nothing more in order to their conversion, nothing at all, until they have believed.'

III. The scriptures represent God as having *a determinate design* in his goings forth in a way of grace, a design which shall never be frustrated. *My counsel*, saith the Lord, *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.—I will work, and who shall let it?* In the sending forth of his gospel, particularly, he speaks on this wise: *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.** But the scheme of P. if I understand it, supposes no such *design*. On the contrary, it supposes that God, in sending his Son into the world, and the gospel of salvation by him, never *absolutely* determined the salvation of one soul; that, notwithstanding any provision which *he* had made to the contrary, the whole world, after all, might have eternally perished; the Son of God might never have seen of the travail of his soul; the gospel might have been a universal savour of death unto death; and the whole harvest of the divine proceedings *an heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow!*

To say that God designed to save *believers*, and therefore his design is not frustrated, is to say true, but not sufficient. For how if there had been no believers to save? And there might have been none at all, according to this scheme; and so, instead of the serpent's head being bruised by the seed of

* Isa. xlvi. 10. xliii. 13. lv. 10, 11.

the woman, Satan might, at last, have come off triumphant; and the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of men might have been baffled in all the works of their hands!

IV. The character of the converted, during their carnal state, is frequently such as proves that their conversion is to be ascribed to sovereign, discriminating, and efficacious grace. It is not owing to any excellency in the objects, either *natural* or *moral*, that they are converted, rather than others. The apostle appeals to the Corinthians, in respect of the former kind of excellencies: *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish—the weak—and the base things of this world, to confound the wise, the mighty*, &c. And all this is said to be, *That no flesh should glory in his presence. But* OF HIM, continues the apostle, ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.**

God bestows converting grace without any respect to *moral qualities*. The chief of sinners are frequently brought to believe in Christ before others, who are far behind them in iniquity. Numberless examples might be produced of this. I shall only instance the case of those two famous, or rather, infamous cities, Jerusalem and Corinth. The one had been guilty of shedding the Redeemer's blood, and the other was a sink of abominations. And yet there were more believers in these cities than in almost any other. How this can be accounted for, but upon the supposition of sovereign and invincible grace, is difficult to say. For, whether the depravity of man is sufficient to overcome any grace that is not invincible, or not, it will be allowed, surely, to have a *tendency* that way. And if so, one should think, the greater the depravity of any man is, the more improbable must be his conversion. The worst of sinners, therefore, believing before others, appears to be altogether inexplicable on the scheme here opposed: but to sovereign and omnipotent grace every mountain becomes a plain; and to this the conversions in both these cities are attributed in scripture. Of the one it was promised, *Thy peo-*

* 1 Cor. i. 26—31.

ple shall be willing in the day of thy power. As to the other, they were reminded, that, though they had been of the worst of characters, yet now they were *washed—they were sanctified by the Spirit of God.* And before their conversion, the Apostle was encouraged in preaching, by this testimony, *I have much people in this city.**

V. The scriptures represent the grace given by the Holy Spirit as being *effectual;* or as producing *certain* and abiding effects. One great difference between the covenant made with the whole nation of Israel at Sinai, and that which God promised to make with his elect under the gospel, appears to consist in this; that the former only propounded things by way of moral suasion, but the latter not only admits of this, but provides for its becoming effectual: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers—which covenant they brake.—But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*† This seems to constitute one essential difference between the law and the gospel; on account of which the one is called the *letter,* and the other the *spirit.* The one is a mere inefficient rule of right and wrong; the other makes provision for the bestowment of the Holy Spirit. It is observable also, that these promises which respect the *first beginning* of real good in the soul are in every respect *absolute.* When promises are made of things which *follow after* our believing, they are generally, if not always, connected with something good in the subject: thus it is promised, that the *righteous* shall hold on his way, and that they that *endure to the end* shall be saved. But nothing of that kind is mentioned here.

If it is objected, that, after mention made of some such things in the prophecy of Ezekiel, it is added, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them:*‡ I reply, It is granted that nothing

* Psa. cx. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Acts xviii. 10.
† Jer. xxxi. 31—33. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37.

is more reasonable than that every man should pray to God to create in him a clean heart, and renew in him a right spirit; and yet nothing is more certain than that no man ever did so pray in sincerity and truth, while under the dominion of sin. And if God, in the bestowment of a new heart, were to wait for this, not an individual would be found amongst the fallen race of man to be a recipient of his favour.* But how, then, are we to understand the passage before cited? I answer, Does not the Lord there speak of what he would do for his *church*, in a way of increasing it *with men like a flock?* If giving a *new heart*, in the former part of the chapter, is to be understood of regeneration, God might make promises to them to renew souls for their enlargement, and these promises might be fulfilled in answer to *their* prayers, though not in answer to the prayers of the unregenerate.

VI. The apostle Peter (chap. i. ver. 2.) styles those to whom he wrote, *Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit*, UNTO OBEDIENCE. *Obedience*, it should seem, *in all its parts*, according to this passage, is that of which election and the sanctification of the Spirit are the proper causes. By the first they are *chosen to it;* through the last they are *fitted for it*. Now P. must admit, that faith in Christ is not only the root of evangelical obedience, but that itself, being a duty, is *a part* of obedience. Hence it is, that believing in Christ is called *obeying* him, (Rom. x. 16. vi. 17. i. 5. Heb. v. 9.) and the contrary is represented as *disobeying* him. (2 Thes. i. 8, 9. 1 Pet. iv. 17.) It follows then, that, if election and the sanctification of the Spirit are the causes of our obedience, they must be the causes of our believing; and, consequently, must precede it, since the cause always precedes the effect. GOD BE THANKED, says the grateful Apostle, that ye have *obeyed* from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you!†

* ——————————————— Grace
Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought.
Happy for man so coming! He her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins, and lost.
MILTON

† Rom. vi. 17.

VII. Whatever *difference* there is between us and others, we are taught, in the scriptures, to ascribe it all to God, and not to boast as if it were of ourselves: *Are we better than they? no, in nowise.—By the grace of God I am what I am.—Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?**

That there is a *difference* between believers and unbelievers, all will allow: but, if the question be asked, *Who maketh thee to differ?* what must be the answer? If the scheme of P. be true, I should think it must be a person's *own self*, and *not God*. If he reply, 'No, I do not maintain that man, *of himself*, can do any thing spiritually good, it is all by the *grace* of God.' Be it so: this grace is supposed to be given indiscriminately to mankind in general. This, therefore, does not in the least alter the case. However the grace of God may be a *remote* cause of the good that is in me, yet it is easy to see, that, upon this supposition, it is no cause whatever of the *difference* between me and another. My unbelieving neighbour had, or might have had, as much grace given him as I; but either he did not ask it, or did not improve the stock imparted to him; which I did. He resisted the Holy Spirit; but I was of a pliable temper, and yielded to his persuasions. I have, therefore, by a good improvement of the grace given or offered to me in common with my neighbour, to all intents and purposes, made myself to differ. But who am I personating?—Philanthropos?—No, surely! It is the language of his creed, not of him: No, no, whatever may escape from the lip, or the pen, his *heart* must unite with ours, NOT UNTO US, LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT TO THY NAME GIVE GLORY!

If it is objected, The Apostle is writing to the Corinthians concerning *spiritual gifts* and advantages, and cutting off their vain boastings on that score, and not concerning spiritual dispositions; I answer, There is, in my opinion, considerable evidence of the contrary.† But, be that as it may, the *reasoning* with which this is effected is equally applicable to the lat-

* Rom. iii. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 10. iv. 7.

† See Dr. Gill's *Cause of God and Truth*, Part II. Chap. IV. No. XV. and Dr. Guyse's paraphrase and note upon the text.

ter as the former. If there is any force in the Apostle's reasoning, it certainly implies thus much; that if, in any thing whatever, we do make ourselves to differ, then we have, so far, a ground for boasting; and if, as believers, we make ourselves to differ from unbelievers, then boasting, in the affairs of our salvation, after all, is not excluded; no, not by *the law of faith.*

I remember a noted writer admits as much as this, and maintains, that, though the primitive Christians had no reason to boast, or glory in their enjoyment of spiritual gifts, seeing they were immediately infused without human industry, and were dispensed by God, and by his Spirit, according to his good pleasure; yet that is not the case in respect of virtue and pious dispositions: in these, he avers, we may boast; yes, in these we may glory in ourselves.* But I have too good an opinion of the humility of P. to imagine that such sentiments can occupy his bosom. I cannot persuade myself that he has so learned Christ. I will venture to repeat it, whatever his hostile *creed* may affirm, his *heart*, especially in his near addresses to God, must accord with the Apostle: *Of him*, yes, OF HIM, *are ye in Christ Jesus.—He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*†

* Dr. Whitby, on 1 Cor. iv. 17. 'Tis true, the Doctor observes, "That we having our faculties from God, the action may well be ascribed, and the whole glory must be due to him." Indeed! If the *whole* be due to him, how is it that we are entitled to a part? Besides, how does this ascribe the glory of our being made to differ to God; seeing one is possessed of these faculties, as well as another?

† The hinge of a great part of the controversy between us turns on the solution of the above subject. That there is a difference between one man and another, cannot be called in question. This difference is either to be ascribed to the grace of God, or to the goodness of the creature. If to the former, the supposition of God's making no difference between one man and another must be given up: if to the latter, then boasting is not excluded, but cherished, even by the law of faith.

It may seem as if we were wanting in our LOVE TO MANKIND; and, by the name my opponent has assumed, he seems to wish to remind us of it, and to suggest the superiority of his system in point of *philanthropy.* But it is not for human passions to govern the divine conduct. We should rejoice in the salvation of the whole human race, if it pleased God; but the whole human race will not be finally saved. That is a fact admitted on both sides: and a fact which the utmost flow of phi-

But it is time for me to attend to the REASONINGS and OBJECTIONS of P. upon this subject. Are there not passages of scripture, it may be asked, which represent the Spirit as being given to us *after* we believe? Yes, there are; and to some of them P. refers us. (p. 22.)* To which it is replied, The Holy Spirit is said to be given in other respects, as well as for the purpose of regeneration. The Spirit was given for the endowing of the primitive Christians with extraordinary gifts and grace. See Acts xix. 2. And this is evidently the meaning of John vii. 39. The Spirit which they that believed on him were to receive was *not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* But surely the eleven Apostles were not till then, in every sense, destitute of the Spirit of God! Farther, The Holy Spirit was given as the enlightener, comforter, and sanctifier of true Christians. Thus Christ promised to send them the Comforter, to guide them into all truth; and this, it is apprehended, is the meaning of Ephes. i. 13, 14. *After ye believed, ye were sealed,* &c. The Apostle prayed for these Ephesians, (ver. 17.) that God would give them the *Spirit* of wisdom, &c. We might as well infer from this, that they were, at that time, destitute of the Spirit of God, as, from the other, that they were so, in every sense, till after they believed. Much the same might be said of the other passages produced.

That men are the *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,* is true; but I apprehend the godly sustain that character on two accounts. One is from their bearing the image of their heavenly Father, which is communicated in regeneration; the other is from their sharing the rights, privileges, and inheritance of the sons of God, which follow upon believing. The one is a work of grace upon us; the other an act of grace towards us. Both are mentioned by the evangelist John, (chap. i. 12, 13.) and the former, I apprehend, is there represented as being prior to the latter.

lanthropy cannot alter: the question then, with us, is, Who deserves the praise of the difference between one man and another? If God has made no difference, we must have made it ourselves; and to us must belong the glory of that difference to eternal ages.

* The passages he has referred us to, are John vii. 38, 39. Ephes. i. 13, 14. Gal. iii. 2. 14.

As to the *consequence* which P. observes must follow—as, that a man must be "regenerated and condemned at the same time." (p. 22.) I answer, This proceeds upon the supposition of a *period of time* taking place between regeneration and coming to Christ. When we speak of one being prior to the other, we mean no more than as a cause is prior to an effect which immediately follows. A blind man must have his eyes open *before* he can see; and yet there is no period of time between the one and the other. As soon as his eyes are opened, he sees. And thus, it is supposed, a man must be *born again*, in order to *see* the kingdom of God.* A man of a wicked temper of mind must be *turned* to be of another spirit, before he can love or choose that which is lovely: but yet there is no supposable period of time between them; for no sooner is he turned, than he is of another spirit, and does love and choose different objects from what he did before.

If, however, P. should not be satisfied with this answer, let him reflect, that, if an absurdity remains, it is such a one as attends his own principles, equally with ours. He supposes we receive the Spirit *after* believing, and refers us for proof to Ephes. i. 13. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.* (p. 22.) Now the scripture is express, *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.*† We might, therefore, retort, and ask, In what condition is a man when he has believed, and before he has received the Spirit of Christ? He is supposed to be a believer, and therefore shall not come into condemnation; but yet, not having the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. To what master, then, does he belong? and to what world must he go, if he should happen to die in this condition? 'But this is mere trifling!' Be it so: it is such as, when used against us, occupies the place of reasoning.

But "if men are regenerated before they come to Christ, then believing in Christ is not the *mean* of a sinner's recovery, but only a *consequence* of that recovery." (p. 23.) Coming to Christ is the mean of a sinner's enjoying the forgiveness of sins, with various other blessings, all included in the term *life*; (John v. 40.) but that is no proof that it is the mean of his

* John iii. 3. † Rom. viii. 9.

regeneration; which it cannot be, unless, contrary to every law of nature to which *regeneration* alludes, spiritual motion can precede, and be the means of spiritual life. Perseverance is the mean of our enjoyment of eternal glory; but it does not thence follow, but that perseverance is a consequence of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

But if regeneration precede our coming to Christ, then "men are excusable, it is supposed, in not coming; and it must be absurd to exhort them to it while they are unregenerate." (p. 22.) If I understand this reasoning, the amount of it is this: If men are so bad, that none but God can turn their hearts, then their badness becomes excusable; and if, in our exhorting them, no hope is to be placed *in them*, then neither is there any to be placed *in God!*' Were I to enter the company of a malicious rebel, with a view to persuade him to go and cast himself at the feet of his abused sovereign, I should have no hope of succeeding, or of bringing him to a compliance, while he remained under the dominion of such a spirit. 'Why, then,' it may be asked, 'do you exhort him to it, till you see his spirit changed?' Why? What if I go in hope of being instrumental in the changing of his spirit? Suppose I urge upon him the goodness of the law he has broken, his wicked and unreasonable revolt, his great and imminent danger, and, above all, the clemency of the prince towards returning rebels; suppose I conjure him, therefore, to go and submit to mercy: may not all this be done without imagining that going and submitting to mercy is a matter so easy, that it may be done by a person possessing a mind still under the dominion of wickedness? May it not, rather, be done in the hope that such means may be succeeded to the reducing him to a right spirit?*

* But might we not, upon these principles, as well let them alone? Some, I am aware, of very different sentiments from P. would say, we might; and that such a mode of exhorting is only setting them to *work*, which tends to fill them with an idea of their *own righteousness*. It is granted, if the *works* to which they are directed are mere *external* things, such as are "within the compass of a carnal heart," and such as they may go on in with ease; then it may tend to lift them up with pride and self-sufficiency. But, if things which are spiritually good are pressed upon them, and they go about a compliance, it is so far from having a

This also may serve for a reply to what P. observes on "exhorting those who are in doubt of their conversion, to apply to Christ." (p. 25.) I think, with him, it is much better to direct such persons immediately to apply to Christ, than to set them about examining the evidences of their regeneration to the neglect of that. And though he is pleased to call this "absurd and ridiculous" upon my principles, yet he has not condescended to back that assertion with any thing like evidence. If regeneration were that which constituted our *war-*

tendency to promote self-righteousness, that it is the most likely mean to destroy it. People who never *try* to repent, pray, &c. generally think they can do these things at any time. Putting a person to the experiment, is the most likely way to convince him of his insufficiency, or, in other words, of his dreadful depravity; and if this is but effected, he will then cry in earnest to the strong for strength. I believe it is God's usual way thus to convince people of their insufficiency. While Saul went on in *external* services, he was at ease, alive, and in high spirits, not doubting but that all was right, and that he was doing God service; but a view of his great obligations to things spiritually good, discovered to him a world of iniquity of which he had never thought. It was from this period that his self-righteousness received its fatal wound: yes, then it was that *sin revived*, and *he died*. Rom. vii. 9. Now, if this is God's usual method of working, surely we ought not, as ministers, to set ourselves against it, but rather to concur with it

It is worthy of remark, how well our opponents here agree amongst themselves. 'Tis true they differ in some respects: some think coming to Christ a matter so easy, that an unrenewed heart may, somehow or other, accomplish it; the others cannot think so, and, therefore, confine their exhortations to things of an external nature. But both agree in this, that men should not be exhorted to any thing but what may be done by an unregenerate heart; that is, by a heart at enmity with God. "Surely," says P. "it cannot be sin for men, as depraved, not to attempt that which the word tells them they *cannot* perform." (p. 23.) And the reasonings of Mr. Button are frequently of the same tendency. But whether such a position be agreeable or contrary to the word of God, let the following passages, amongst many others, determine; Jer. vi. 8—11. 15, 16. Matt. xii. 34. John v. 44, 45. viii. 43—46. Rom. viii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 14. If Mr. Button should here complain, and say, he has acknowledged that "*internal religion* is required of men in general,"—I answer, If Mr. B. or any other minister does, indeed, exhort the carnal part of their auditory to any thing more than what is "within the compass of a carnal heart," then, it is acknowledged, they are not affected by what is above advanced.

rant to apply to Christ, his reasoning would be just; but if it is only a begetting in us a *right spirit*, a spirit to comply with the warrant which we already have, then there is no weight in it. All right action, whether corporeal or mental, must proceed from a right spirit; yet if a man were in doubt whether he was of a right spirit, which would be reckoned the most ridiculous, to exhort him to right action, or to set him to examine his spirit by rules of theory, and bid him wait till he found he was of a good spirit, and then perform a good action? The latter would be pernicious, or, to say the least, perplexing; but a compliance with the former would be attended with both safety and satisfaction.

P. frequently makes mention of a passage from Mr. Caleb Evans, which I also had quoted, which is as follows: "The calls and invitations, the promises and threatenings of the word of God, are means which every one knows are in their own nature adapted to remove a moral indisposition of the mind, just as much as the prescriptions of a physician, or the operations of a surgeon, are suited to remove any natural disorder of the body." He also frequently speaks as if the reason why the gospel, rather than the law, succeeded to the conversion of a sinner was, because of this fitness, adaptedness, or innate tendency of which it is possessed. (p. 67.) But, it should be observed, Mr. Evans's words are not spoken simply of the *gospel;* they are spoken of the *threatenings* as well as the promises in the word of God, which, I should think, are no part of the gospel, though, as P. somewhere expresses it, they are necessarily attendant on it, and so make a part of the ministerial message.

Farther: Our dispute is not whether the gospel be a suitable mean in the hand of the Holy Spirit to convert a sinner, but whether it is sufficient in virtue of this its suitableness, to effect the change without an almighty and invincible agency attending it? A sword is a suitable instrument to cause a wound; but it does not thence follow, that it is of itself sufficient to effect this without a hand to wield it. Three things I would here beg leave to offer: 1. The Holy Spirit can, and does make use of the *law*, as well as the gospel, in a sinner's conversion. *I had not known sin*, says the apostle, *but by the*

*law.—The law is a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ.** 2. If the success of the gospel is to be attributed to its suitableness, then, I suppose, it must be on account of its containing *good tidings;* and so tending to slay men's native enmity, and to conciliate their hearts to God. But the scripture represents the human heart as equally prone to abuse God's mercy, as to despise his severity. *Let favour be showed to the wicked*, says the prophet, *yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.*† The reason why men hate God is not because they consider him, in every sense, as their enemy: if so, could you but persuade them that God loved them, and Christ died for them, their enmity would subside. But is that indeed the case? Do not the generality of men consider God as their friend? nor can you persuade them that they are under his displeasure. Yet this has no tendency to remove their enmity. What they hate in God is that from which their hearts are wholly averse; and that is, his *true character*. 3. The success which has attended the gospel is not ascribed to its supposed fitness to conciliate a sinner's heart, but to the power of Almighty God attending it. I hope this last has been sufficiently proved already. God ordered Moses to take a rod, and smite the rock. The rod, to be sure, was the means of breaking the rock; not, however, on account of its being *equal* to such an effect; the rock rather had a tendency to break the rod, than the rod the rock. But an almighty energy attended it from Him with whom all things are possible.

That the gospel is suited to the state of men, as fallen, is granted: (p. 23.) it *is* suited to their forlorn *circumstances*, but *not* to their evil *propensities*. It could not be of God, if it were. But to make believing in Christ something that may be done by a wicked mind, is to reduce the gospel to the latter, rather than the former; and this, contrary to the apostle's declaration, *They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*‡

P. observes, that, if believing is the effect of regeneration, then men certainly "ought to be taught this truth;" and seems greatly to tremble for the consequences of such teach-

* Rom. vii. 7. Gal. iii. 24. † Isa. xxvi. 10. ‡ Rom. viii. 8.

ing. (p. 22.) It is granted there is a way of conveying this sentiment which is very pernicious: nevertheless, I see no reason why we should scruple the publishing of the sentiment itself, in the course of our ministry. To tell a sinner he *cannot* love God, repent of sin, and come to Christ, is only another mode of telling him that he has the very heart of a devil. 'But this is killing work.' It is granted; and all my hope is, that God will please to succeed my labours, first to kill, and then to make alive. A conviction of our being utterly lost must precede an application to the Saviour. So long as a sinner can find any hope, or any help in himself, he will never fall at the feet of Christ, as utterly undone. The whole need not a physician, but those that are sick. If it tends to drive sinners to *despair*, it is such a despair as lies at the foundation of gospel-hope. The sinner may be *alive* without the law; but, if he live to God, the commandment must first come, sin revive, and *he die*.* So far from shunning to declare this sentiment, humiliating as it is, I should rejoice, therefore, to see it propagated throughout the earth. That which renders it peculiarly offensive, is one thing on account of which it appears to me to be a truth; and that is, its laying the sinner absolutely at the divine discretion, and cutting off all hope whatever, but what shall arise from the sovereignty of God.

SECTION II.

ON NATURAL AND MORAL INABILITY.

ON this subject I find it difficult to collect the real sentiments of P. Sometimes, he seems to admit of the distinction, and allows that I have written upon it with "perspicuity." (p. 63.) At other times, he appears utterly to reject it, and to reason upon the supposition of there being no difference between the one and the other; and that to command a person

* Rom. vii. 9.

to perform any thing with which it is not in the power of his heart to comply, (for this, he must know, is the only idea we have of moral inability,) is as unreasonable, unless grace is bestowed, as to "command a stone to walk, or a horse to sing." (p. 44.) If this is indeed the case, the distinction ought to be given up. Be that, however, as it may, whether there be any real difference between natural and moral inability, in point of blame-worthiness, or not, P. knows that I suppose there is: by what rule of fair reasoning, therefore, he could take the contrary for granted, is difficult to determine.

But, passing this, from the whole of what P. has written on this subject, I observe there are *three* things, which, somehow or other, either severally or jointly, are supposed to constitute even a moral inability blameless. One is, men could not *avoid* it; they were depraved and ruined by Adam's transgression; another is, its being so great in degree, as to be *insuperable;* and the last is, if *grace* is not given, sufficient to deliver us from it. "If," says he, "men could never *avoid it*, and *cannot deliver themselves from it*, and *the blessed God will not deliver them;* surely they ought not to be punished for it, or for any of its *necessary* effects." (p. 67.)

The *first two* of these suppositions, be it observed, are admitted by P. as *facts*. Men *are*, he acknowledges, born in sin, and "their inability to do things spiritually good is real and total." (pp. 44. 57.) They cannot love God, nor keep his holy law. Now, these facts either do excuse mankind in their want of conformity to the law, or they do not. If they do not, why are they produced? If they do, there is no need for what respects the *last* supposition. There is no need, surely, for *grace* to deliver men from a state wherein they are already *blameless*. The *justice* of God, one should think, would see to that, and prevent the innocent from being condemned. But let us give each of these subjects a separate consideration.

I. *Men being* BORN IN SIN, *or inheriting their evil propensities from Adam's fall.* It has been observed already, that P. admits the *fact:* now, to admit this fact is, I should think, to admit a *constituted union* having taken place between Adam and his posterity. And yet the whole of what he says upon

this subject proceeds from the supposition of no such *union* taking place; for he, all along, speaks of Adam and his descendants in a *separate* capacity. Thus he insists upon it, that "*we* could not be to blame for what *we* could not avoid;" with many passages of the like kind. Very true: but, if the notion of a union between Adam and his posterity be admitted, then it cannot properly be said, *we* could not avoid it: for, in that case, he was the head, and we the members; the whole constituting one body, or, as it were, one person. A union of this nature must either be admitted, or denied; if admitted, why consider the descendants of Adam in a *separate* capacity?—If denied, why speak of inheriting any thing from him, unless it were by ill example?

Infants are not to blame in a *personal* capacity: but, if there be a union between the parent of mankind and his posterity, through which their depravity is derived, as it is supposed there is, they must be to blame *relatively*. No one, I suppose, can be to blame in a personal capacity, till he is capable of the knowledge of right and wrong; but it does not follow from thence, that, till then, he is, *in every sense*, blameless; for that would be the same thing as to be sinless: and if so, I see not how they can be said to be born *in sin*. If there is not blame somewhere, it will be very difficult to account for the misery and death to which infants are exposed; and for the apostle's mode of reasoning, who first asserts, that before the Mosaic law *sin* was in the world, and then proves this assertion by the reign of *death*, "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."*

That this is a difficult and awful subject, is allowed; and so is the introduction of moral evil into the world, be it upon what hypothesis it may. It is a subject, however, which, in my apprehension, I must either admit, or reject the authority of the Bible: and when I had done that, my difficulties, instead of being diminished, would be abundantly increased. I therefore admit it, upon the credit of divine revelation; and herein, it seems, I have the happiness to agree with P. He admits that men become sinners in consequence of Adam's fall. The question, then, between us seems to be this:

* Rom. v. 13, 14.

Whether to be a *sinner* is the same thing as to be a subject of *blame;* or, whether there be a sort of sin which has nothing blameworthy in it, and a sort of sinners who, nevertheless, are blameless beings?

P. admits of our being born with *impure propensities*, and yet supposes these propensities in themselves to be blameless. He reckons the whole blame to lie, not in being the subject of these propensities, but in the *exercise* and *indulgence* of them. (pp. 65, 66.) I confess I cannot understand how this can consist either with his own sentiments, or with the nature of things. Not with his own sentiments; for he allows that "men are *ruined* and *depraved* by Adam's fall." But how can we be ruined and depraved by that which does not, in any sense, constitute us blameworthy? What though we derive impure propensities from him, yet, if these propensities are innocent, how can they *ruin* us? how can they *deprave* us? Our depravity must consist in, and our ruin arise from, that which constitutes blame, and that alone; and if blame lies merely in the *indulgence* of impure propensity, and not in being the subject of the thing itself, why, then, it is there we have to look for the *beginning* of depravity and ruin, and nowhere else. How far these sentiments will agree likewise with the doctrine of human depravity, which P. assures us he by no means intended to oppose, may deserve his attention.

Farther: I see not how the above sentiments can consist with the *nature of things*. If blame does not lie in being the subject of an evil disposition, because, as individuals, we could not avoid it; then, for the same reason, it cannot lie in the *exercise* of that disposition, unless that also can be avoided. And this is what P. seems to allow; for he extends blamelessness not only to evil dispositions, but to all their "necessary *effects*." (p. 67.) Now, there is either a possibility of that *exercise* being totally avoided, or there is not: there is either a possibility, for instance, of a person living all his life without a *foolish thought*, or there is not. If there is, then there is a possibility of going through life in a sinless state; and if so, how are we depraved by Adam's fall? If there is not, then, it must follow, that the exercise of evil dispositions may be blameless, as well as the dispositions themselves; and, contrary to the decision of holy scripture, that *the thought of foolishness* is not sin.

We may go on to distinguish an evil propensity from its *exercise*, till we use words without ideas; for what is an evil propensity, but an evil bias, or a bias of the soul towards evil? And whether it is possible to conceive of an inactive propensity in a rational being, is doubtful with me. But suppose we may, the common sense of mankind never teaches them so to distinguish them, as to excuse the one, and place all blameworthiness in the other. An impure propensity is an impure temper of mind; and a propensity to revenge is the same thing as a revengeful temper: but tempers of this description are so far from being excusable, that there is nothing mankind are more apt to censure. 'Tis true they cannot censure them but as they see them *discovered*, because they have no other method of knowing the evil stock but by its evil branches; but, when they do discover them, they seldom fail to curse both root and branch.*

Neither do people think of excusing a churlish, haughty, or covetous temper in any man, because of his father's being so before him. On the contrary, they often turn that very circumstance to his reproach. 'You are a villain,' say they, '*by nature*, and all your *family* were so before you.' If men offend one against another, strict inquiry is made whether the offence proceeded from an evil disposition, or from mere inadvertency; and, according as this is found, allowances are made. But I know not that it is ever asked, how the party *came by* his evil disposition: that is a matter introduced into *divinity*, where God is the object offended; but it cannot be admitted into the common affairs of life, between man and man. Now, if the common sense of mankind never leads

* 'Tis true, there are certain propensities which constitute a part of our nature, as men, and which, therefore, are simply *natural*; the *excessive* indulgence whereof is, nevertheless, *sinful*. Thus, *emulation*, in itself, is natural; but, carried to excess, it becomes *pride*. Thus, also, *the love of pleasure* is, in itself, natural; but, carried to excess, it becomes *voluptuousness*, &c. &c. But P. cannot justly pretend, that when he makes blame to consist not in the propensity itself, but in the exercise or indulgence of it, he means these natural propensities; because he speaks of them as derived from Adam's fall, which these are not; and calls them *impure*, whereas these, in themselves considered, are a part of human nature in its purest state.

them to take this circumstance into consideration in matters between themselves, it is, at least, a presumptive argument, that it will not bear advancing in matters of offence against God. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.*

That evil dispositions are, in themselves, blameworthy, notwithstanding their derivation from our first parents, not only accords with the common sense of mankind, but also with *the word of God.* The word of God requires us to *love* him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; but to love God in this manner supposes the absence of all evil propensity to rebel against him, and of every approach towards a spirit of contrariety to him. It must follow, then, so long as this holy law of God is allowed to be an "infallible test of right and wrong," (p. 67.) that such a propensity is, in itself, sinful, being directly contrary to its righteous requirements. It is not merely a something which "*leads* to evil tempers," (as P. speaks, p. 66.) but it is itself an evil temper of the mind; a temper that can take no delight in God, or in any thing that bears his holy likeness.

Farther: His idea of blameworthiness, if I understand it, agrees to nothing but *positive* acts of sin; the *exercise* or *indulgence* of an evil propensity can agree to nothing else. Now, according to this, there is no such thing as sin or blame in that universal want of love to God, which has place in all unregenerate men, and to an awful degree in good men; for that, strictly speaking, is not so much a positively evil disposition, as it is the absence of a good one. But, if the law of God is the "test of right and wrong," this must, nevertheless, be found sinful; for it is the very reverse of what that law requires. If there is nothing blameworthy in the want of a heart to love God, nor even in a propensity to hate him, then, surely, the moral law must be abrogated by man's apostacy; and can be no longer to us "the standard of right and wrong."

The law is said to have entered, *that the* OFFENCE *might abound;* and by the *law* is the knowledge of *sin.** The only certain rule, therefore, of determining what is *sin*, is to in-

* Rom. v. 20. iii. 20.

quire into the extent of that unerring rule. Now, the law, as given in the decalogue, requires love to God with all the heart, without making any allowance for our being born destitute of a disposition so to do. It should seem, therefore, that God considered the want of a disposition to love him as *offensive;* and gave the law, which requires such a disposition, that that offence might abound, or be made manifest. But if there be nothing blameworthy in it, there can be nothing *offensive;* and if no offence exists, none can be *made to abound.*

P. allows my "reasonings on the extent of the moral law to be very conclusive." This, I should think, is rather extraordinary; but this is not all: he thinks "it would most certainly contribute much, under the blessing of God, to the conversion of sinners, if a due regard were always paid to it." (p. 67.) But, according to the reasoning above, I see no such tendency it could have. For the carnal mind of man is *enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither in deed can it be;* and they were born in this condition. How, then, could it promote rational conviction? Whatever tendency it might have to bring them to love the *Saviour*, it must be at the expense of their regard for the Lawgiver. Yea, it must fill them with greater enmity against him, to hear of his requiring *that* of them which is not reasonable, in their present circumstances, should be required. If they are taught to consider the Lawgiver of the world as resembling a cruel Egyptian task-master, and the Saviour as one who came into the world to deliver them, by repealing his rigorous edicts; then they may love the one, and hate the other. But if the Saviour is viewed in his true character, as not coming to abrogate the law, but to *magnify, and make it honourable;* to condemn the sinner's conduct, while he saves his soul; then they cannot hate the one, without equally hating the other.

"I do not know," says P. "that the scripture ever blames man, much less condemns him, because he is born impure, or because he is the subject of impure propensities." (p. 65.) As to the actual execution of condemnation, it is not for me to say, how far the mercy of God will be extended. If those who die before their evil propensities are reduced to action are all saved, I suppose they are saved through the mediation

of Christ, and not taken to heaven on the footing of personal innocency. But, in respect to *blame-worthiness*, I remember a man who once took blame and shame to himself for his original impurity; bringing it in amongst his penitential confessions, that he was *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin;* and that, surely, with an intention not to excuse, but to aggravate his crimes. In the same Psalm, and in the next sentence, after acknowledging the depravity of his *nature*, the penitent Psalmist adds, *Thou desireth truth in the inward parts;* which, I should think, must intend the *opposite* of that in which he had just confessed himself to have been conceived and shapen.* Farther: we are said to have been, *by nature, the children of wrath:*† but one should suppose, there could be no *wrath* due to us, if no blame were found in us.

P. asserts, that, in respect of the impurity of our nature, we are under a *natural inability* of avoiding it; which, therefore, must be innocent. (p. 65.) But to call such an inability as this *natural*, is, I apprehend, to apply the term in such a manner as tends to produce a confusion of ideas. Whatever defect attends any man, which is simply natural, it must belong to some constituent part of his *nature*, or of that which constitutes him a *man*. If the definition which I have heretofore given of natural ability be just, (and this P. has fully acknowledged, p. 64.) it must be either a defect in 'rational faculties, or bodily powers, or opportunity to put those faculties, or powers, in exercise.' But neither purity nor impurity, come by them how we may, are any constituent parts of human nature; a defect, therefore, in that matter, cannot, with propriety, be called a natural defect. The depravity of our hearts is not owing to natural weakness, either of body or mind, nor yet to the want of opportunity to know and glorify God. When we speak of it as being the *sin of our nature*, we use the term in a very different sense from what we do, when speaking of *natural* inability. By the *sin of our nature*, we mean, not any thing which belongs to our nature as human, but what is, by the fall, so interwoven with it, as if it were, though, in fact, it is not, a part of it; and so deeply rooted in our souls as to become *natural*, as it were, to us.

* Psa. li. 5, 6. † Ephes. ii. 3.

But it will be said, 'It must be a *natural* inability; for it is not at our option whether we will be born pure or impure: it is, therefore, what we cannot avoid, in any sense whatever.' To this it is replied, as before, There is no justice, or fairness, in considering mankind as united to Adam, or not united, just as it may serve a purpose. If they are not to be considered as *one*, why speak of inheriting impure propensities? If they are, why speak of them in a separate capacity? To admit of a union between Adam and his posterity, and, at the same time, keep exclaiming, '*We* could not avoid being sinners; *we* are not to blame, and ought not to suffer;' is as unreasonable as if a criminal should complain, at the hour of execution, that he was to be hanged by the *neck*, for what he had stolen with his *hands*. Whatever difficulty may attend us in this part, it is a difficulty that belongs not to the doctrine of natural and moral inability, but to that of *original sin;* a difficulty, therefore, which affects us no more than it does those who differ from us.

II. The next thing which P. considers as contributing to render even a moral inability blameless is, its being so great in degree, as to become *insuperable*. According to my principles, he says, our moral inability is invincible; and insists upon it, that, if so, it is excusable. "No man," says he, blames a lion, because he has not the disposition of a lamb: and if a lion had the *understanding* of a man, yet, *if he could not alter* his native ferocity, he would certainly be as unblameable as he is without understanding." The same reasoning holds good in all other instances. (p. 68.) To all which it is replied, If he mean that they *cannot but sin, though they would do otherwise never so fain*, it is granted all this reasoning is fair and just: it would then be a natural inability, and, therefore, excusable. But, if this were all he meant, it would amount to nothing. If he mean any thing to the purpose, any thing different from that which he opposes, it must be this: that, *if their hearts are so set in them to do evil, that, though they could do otherwise, if they would, yet they will not, but will be sure, in every instance, to choose the wrong path;* THEN *they must, of course, be excusable*. And, if this be what he maintains, his reasoning appears, to me, not only inconsistent, but extravagant.

P. must know, surely, that, when the terms *cannot*, *inability*, &c. are used in these connexions, they are used, not in a *proper*, but in a *figurative* sense; that they do not express the state of a person hindered by something extraneous to his own will, but denote what we usually mean by the phrase. *cannot find in his heart;* that depravity is not *natural* to us, in the same sense as ferocity is to a lion; that it is rather the ruin and disgrace of our nature, than any part of it: and that, therefore, such comparisons are but ill adapted to illustrate the subject.

We suppose that the propensities of mankind to evil are so strong as to become invincible by every thing but omnipotent grace: but, whether that is allowed, or not, I think it must be allowed, that they are such as to render spiritual exercises very *difficult;* at least, they have *some tendency* that way. Now, if the above reasoning be just, it will follow, that, in proportion to the *degree* of that difficulty, the subjects thereof ought to be excused in the omission of spiritual exercises. P. supposes, that, in this case, there is no difference between natural and moral inability; and his argument proceeds, all along, upon this supposition. Now, we know, that in all cases where impediments are simply natural, it is not at all more evident than an entire inability amounts to a full excuse, than that a *great difficulty* excuses in a *great degree*. If, therefore, such reasoning be just, it must follow that men are excusable in exact proportion to the strength of their evil propensities; that is, they are excusable in just the same proportion as, according to the common sense of mankind, they are internally wicked, or culpable!

If we suppose a man, for example, in his younger years to have had but very little aversion from Christ, and his way of salvation: he is then *exceedingly wicked* for not coming to him. As he advances in years, his evil propensities increase, and his aversion becomes stronger and stronger; by this time, his guilt is *greatly diminished*. And, if it were possible for him to become so much of a devil as for his prejudices to be utterly invincible, he would then, according to P. be *altogether innocent!**

* See President *Edwards on the Will,* Part III. Sect. III.

P. thinks this matter so plain, it seems, that he even tells his correspondent, "neither he nor his friend (meaning me,) could imagine that a command given, and not obeyed, renders the subjects of such command criminal, unless these subjects have power, or might have power, to obey such command." (p. 43) If by "power" he had meant natural ability, I should certainly have accorded with the sentiment; but it is very plain he means to apply it to moral, as well as natural ability; and then he is certainly mistaken. For I not only can imagine that to be the case, but do verily believe it. Yea, I can scarcely think that P. himself can believe the contrary; at least, he will not, he cannot, abide by its just and necessary consequences. If what he says be true, it is either *possible that no offences should come*, or else no *woe* is due *to those by whom they come.** It must likewise follow, that every man has, or might have, power to live entirely blameless through life, both towards God and towards man; for be it so, that some degree of imperfection will continue to attend him, yet that imperfection, being supposed to be "a necessary effect" of the fall, cannot be *blameworthy:* (p. 67.) and so it is possible for a fallen son of Adam to live and die blameless, and, consequently, to appear in his own righteousness without *fault* before the throne of God. These consequences, however anti-scriptural and absurd, are no more than must inevitably follow from the position of Philanthropos.

"According to my principles," I am told, "men's moral inability is *invincible.*" (p. 68.) If I have used that term in the former treatise, or the present, it is for want of a better. It is easy to see, that my principles do not so much maintain that the moral inability of men is such as to render all their attempts to overcome it vain, as that sin hath such a dominion in their heart as to *prevent* any *real attempts* of that nature being made. If a whole country were possessed by a foreign enemy, and all its posts and avenues occupied by his forces, and all the inhabitants dead, that so much as wished to oppose him; in that case, to say, his power was become invincible by any opposition *from that country* would hardly be proper; seeing all opposition *there* is subdued, and all the country are

* Luke xvii. 1.

of one side. *Invincible* is a relative term, and supposes an opposition made, though made in vain. But moral inability is of such a nature, where it *totally* prevails, as to prevent all real and direct opposition being made. It is the same thing as for the hearts of the sons of men to be *fully* set in them to do evil—to be *full of evil*, while they live; for every imagination of the heart to be *only evil*, and that continually.* Now, if we say, this moral indisposition is invincible, it is for the want of a better term. What we affirm is this, rather; that, suppose it were conquerable, there is nothing of real good in the sinner's heart to conquer it. If sin is conquered by any efforts of ours, it must be by such as are *voluntary*. It is not enough, that we are "rational beings," and that conscience suggests to us what ought to be: (p. 66.) we must *choose* to go about it, and that in good earnest, or we shall never effect it. But where the thoughts of the *heart* are only evil, and that continually, it is supposing a plain contradiction, to suppose ourselves the subjects of any such volition, or desire.

III. But it will be said, Though moral inability is total, yet it is conquerable by THE GRACE OF GOD; and this grace is given to every man in the world, or would be given, were he to ask it: and this it is which renders men inexcusable. (p. 66.) Without this, P. avows, that "any man, be his practices as vile as they may, may excuse himself from blame; and all real good whatever may be denied to be the duty of an unprincipled mind." (p. 59.) This seems to be his last and grand resort, and what he often dwells upon. The discussion of this subject will finish the present Section.

I bless God that moral inability is indeed conquerable by the grace of God, though I question whether it is, or ever was, conquered by what P. calls by that name. But suppose, for argument's sake, we grant him his hypothesis, I question if it will answer his end. This grace is either *actually given* to all mankind, or *would be given* upon their application. If actually given, I should be glad to know what it is. Is it light in the understanding, or love in the heart? Is it any thing, or productive of any thing, that is truly good? If so, how does this accord with the description given of men, that their

* Eccles. viii. 11. ix. 3. Gen. vi. 5.

minds are *darkness*, their hearts *enmity*, and that there is none of them that *doeth good*, no not one?* Or is it something for which there is no name, a sort of *seed* sown in the heart, which, if neglected, will perish, but, if watered by human industry, will be productive? If so the difficulty is not at all removed; for then the question is, Whether a mind so depraved as to be *totally* unable to do any thing spiritually good, will ever be inclined to improve that grace, to water the seed, so as that it may bring forth fruit?

If the last member of the position be adopted, viz. that all mankind *might have* grace sufficient to overcome their moral inability, if they would apply for it; still the question returns, Will a mind *totally* destitute of any thing spiritually good, and *fully* set upon doing evil, apply to God for grace to such an end? Is it not inconsistent for a tree that is *wholly* evil, to bring forth good fruit? Or are we to imagine, after all, that Satan will rise up against himself? To apply to God in any right manner for grace for the cure of an evil propensity, must suppose a desire to have that propensity cured; but to suppose a person totally under the dominion of a propensity, and at the same time properly and directly desiring to have such propensity removed, is what some people would call by the hard name of self-contradiction.†

Farther; I query if the hypothesis of P. instead of answering his end, will not be found subversive of itself, and destructive of his main design. Making this supposed grace the only thing which constitutes men accountable beings, is making it DEBT, surely, rather than GRACE. I have too good an opinion of the humility and integrity of P. to imagine he *intends* merely to compliment the Almighty in calling it *grace;* but I think it becomes him to examine his scheme, and see whether it amounts to any thing less. Grace is free favour towards the unworthy. It supposes the subject destitute of all claim whatever, and the author to be free to give or to withhold. But all that this supposed grace amounts to is, not to prove that God has done any thing more than he was bound to do,

* Ephes. v. 8. Rom. viii. 7. iii. 12.

† See President *Edwards on the Will*, Part III. Sect. V. on sincere endeavours.

but, barely, that he has done what he had a right to expect, or else to be at liberty to throw off his yoke with impunity. It does not, therefore, at all prove Jehovah to be *gracious;* if it serve for any thing, it can be only to justify his character from the imputation of *injustice* and *cruelty*, or from being what P. calls "a merciless tyrant." (p. 88.)

But farther: I question if even *this* end will be answered by it. I question if it will not be found, upon the principles and reasonings of P. that this supposed grace, instead of being any real favour towards mankind, is the greatest curse that could ever befal them. If Christ had never come, and no grace had been given in him, then, according to the reasoning of P. men had never been responsible for any part of their conduct. They would, it is true, have been born depraved, and lived depraved; but, having no *power* to avoid it, or to free themselves from it, "where," he asks, "would have been their criminality?" (pp. 44. 57.) He does not scruple to acknowledge, that, if no grace were provided, "any man, be his practices as vile as they might, might excuse himself from blame: and all real good whatever might be denied to be the duty of an unprincipled mind." (p. 59.) Now, if things are so, that men without the bestowment of grace, would have been free from criminality; surely the righteousness of God could never have suffered them to be sent to hell, and the goodness of God, we may suppose, would have raised them to eternal life; and so they might have been innocent and happy, if Jesus had never died: but now, alas! in consequence of his coming, and of *grace* being given them, to deliver them from something wherein they were never blameworthy; now they lie all exposed to inexcusable blame and everlasting ruin!!!*

* When I consider the above positions, I am entirely at a loss to understand the following passage: "It is granted, Sir, that God might justly have left man in the state he was born in, and brought into by Adam's sin, whatever state that be." (p. 57.) What such a state would have been P. does not determine: he seems here to consider it, however, as deserving some *sort of punishment;* otherwise there is no meaning in that comparative mode of speaking, which he so frequently uses, of being *punished* MORE *severely.* But does P. really mean what he writes? Compare this passage with what he has asserted in pages 44. 57. 59. and it amounts to nothing less than this—*that it would have been just in God*

P. speaks of the "almighty and all-gracious God being represented as *contriving* to make poor sinners miserable under the colour of invitations," &c. (p. 45.) I delight not in the use of such expressions; they appear to me, to say the least, as bordering on irreverence. But, if such language must be used, and such consequences urged, let the reader judge to whose sentiments they belong; to those of P. or mine.

That Christ died for our SINS, *according to the scriptures*, is allowed by P. and, I should think, by every Christian, to be a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. (p. 34. note.) The apostle, doubtless, considered this, and his resurrection from the dead, in such a light, when he concluded, that, if the opposite were true, the *faith* of the Corinthians *was vain, and they were yet in their sins.** But, fundamental as these sentiments are, if the scheme of P. be true, the first of them must, of necessity, be false. If his sentiments are true, Christ did not come into the world TO SAVE MEN FROM SIN, BUT RATHER TO PUT THEM INTO A CAPACITY OF SINNING; AS IT IS IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DEATH, AND THAT ALONE, THAT GUILT BECOMES CHARGEABLE UPON THEM. So far from being *yet in their sins*, if Christ had neither died for them, nor risen from the dead, they had then been incapable of sinning at all, and ought not to have been accountable to God, let their practices have been what they might!

It is possible the reader may be startled at the imputation of such consequences as the above; and, truly, they are of such a nature as ought to startle not the reader only. 'But are not things carried to an extreme?' If they are, it is unknown to me: but let us go over the ground again, and see. P. supposes, 1. That man was so reduced by the fall, as to be "*really and totally unable to do good.*" (p. 57.) 2. That, if he had been left in this condition, he would not have been to blame for not doing it, but that his inability would have been his excuse: (pp 44. 57. 59.) yea, "let his practices have been as vile as they might, he would have been excusable."

to have punished the human race by acquitting them of all blame, and bringing them in guiltless!

* 1 Cor. xv. 3—17.

(p. 59.) But, 3. That God has not left him in this condition. He has sent his Son to die for all men universally; and, by giving, or, at least, offering, his Spirit to all men, he removes the inability which they derived from the fall; and from hence they become accountable beings, and are inexcusable, if they do not comply with things spiritually good. (p. 66.) If words have any meaning, I should think these are the real sentiments of P. Now, if these be true, it must follow, that *Christ did not die for the* SINS *of any man*, except it were Adam; since none of the fallen race could have *sinned*, if he had never died. The reasonings of P. suppose that men are not chargeable with *sin*, or *blameworthiness*, independently of the death of Christ and the grace of the gospel: and, if so, it could not be to atone for *sin* that he laid down his life; for, prior to the consideration of this, there was no sin for which he could have to atone.

If I have unhappily adopted an indefensible mode of reasoning, let it be fairly confuted. Till I see that done, I shall continue to think the sentiments of P. on this subject eversive of one of the fundamental principles of Christianity.

There is a thought on which P. repeatedly insists. It is this, that, "supposing it to be just to punish men eternally for that depravity which they derive from their first parents, (this, however, is more than he in fact will allow,) yet it is very hard that any *addition* should be made to the obligations they lie under, and that punishments should be annexed to these obligations which they have no power either to regard or avoid." (p. 45.) He often speaks of the injustice of punishing those who enjoy gospel-opportunities, and neglect them, "*more severely* than if they had never enjoyed them, if they had not *power* sufficient to have embraced them." (p. 57.) To all which I reply,

It seems, if men had but *power* to comply, all this injustice would subside. Well: we affirm they *have power*. They have the same natural ability to embrace Christ, as to reject him. They *could* comply with the gospel *if they would*. Is any thing more necessary to denominate them accountable beings? We believe not; and perhaps, in fact, P. believes the same. In some places, however, he appears to think there is. Well: what is it? If any thing, it must be an *inclination*,

as well as an ability. Now, would P. be willing to have his objection thus stated: It is hard that new obligations should be laid upon persons who have no *inclination* to what they already lie under? If so, it will afford final unbelievers a powerful plea at the last day. 'No,' it will be said, '*they might have had an inclination, if they would:*' but let it be considered, whether any thing like this is revealed in scripture, and whether it is not repugnant even to common sense. *If they had been willing, they might, or would, have been willing:* that is the amount of it, which is saying just nothing at all. But, passing this,

Whoever be right, he or I, neither of us ought to take our own hypothesis for granted, and proceed to charge the consequences upon the other. And yet this is what P. has done. The whole force of his reasoning in p. 45, and divers other places, rests upon the supposition of that being true which is a matter of dispute; viz. that natural power is not power, and is not sufficient to denominate men accountable beings. His statement of the above objection takes this for granted: whereas this is what we positively deny, maintaining that natural power *is* power, properly so called, and is, to all intents and purposes, sufficient to render men accountable beings; that the want of inclination in a sinner is of no account with the Governor of the world; that he proceeds in his requirements, and that it is right he should proceed, in the same way as if no such disinclination existed. If this can be solidly disproved, let it: it will be time enough then to exclaim of injustice and cruelty, and to compare the Divine Being to an Egyptian taskmaster, or to "a wicked Rehoboam." (p. 92.)*

The question appears, to me, to be this, *Is it unrighteous*

* I wish P. had spoken of the Divine Being, here, and in some other places, in language more becoming a worm of the dust. I have no objection to the consequences of a sentiment being fairly pointed out, and thoroughly urged; but, suppose such a consequence as this had been just, it might have been urged in more sober language. Surely it is too much for a creature to talk of his Creator being wicked! But I have no conviction, at present, of such a consequence being just If it be, it must be upon this supposition, that not *capacity* and *opportunity*, but *inclination* to do good, is analogous to the straw with which the Israelites ought to have been furnished, for the making of brick.

in God to do right, because he knows men will be sure from thence to take occasion to do wrong, and aggravate their own destruction? God knew assuredly, that all the messages sent to Pharaoh would only harden his heart, and aggravate his ruin: *I am sure*, said Jehovah to his servant, *that the king of Egypt will not let you go; no, not by a mighty hand:* and yet he did not, in the least, hold himself obliged either to give him grace that should soften his heart, or to discontinue his messages, which, without such grace, were certain to issue in the aggravation of his ruin. 'But Pharaoh could have complied, if he would.' We grant it: and so could they who reject Christ. They are under no other necessity in the one case, than Pharaoh was in the other.

Whatever dissimilarity there may be between the condition of *fallen angels* and that of sinners in the present life, who will finally perish; the case of the former sufficiently serves to refute the supposition of P. The redemption of man has certainly been an *occasion* of a world of guilt to those revolted spirits. Had not Christ come, Satan could never have had an opportunity to have sinned in the manner he has, in tempting him, instigating his murderers, and, all along, opposing the spread of his kingdom. But would it be right, therefore, for Satan, in behalf of himself and his associates, to plead in this manner at the great assize—'Why were we not confined to the deep? Seeing no mercy was designed for us, where was the justice of suffering us to range in the world, where it was certain we should only increase our guilt, and so be punished the *more severely?* Surely our first revolt was enough for us, without being suffered to go any farther?'

If the reasoning of P. on this subject, particularly in p. 57, prove any thing, it will prove, not merely that sinners ought not to be punished *more severely;* but that, if it were not for grace provided for them, they ought not to be punished *at all.* In that case one should think, the greatest grace would have been to have let them alone, and left them under the ruins of the fall: then had they been blameless and harmless, without rebuke, and, consequently, unexposed to misery, either here or hereafter.

After all, I question if P. really means any thing more by his notion of grace, than we do by natural ability. We allow

that men can come to Christ, and do things spiritually good, *if they will.* He is not satisfied, it seems, with this: they must have something of *grace* given, or offered, or otherwise they cannot be accountable beings. Well: what does it all amount to? Does he mean, that they must have something of real good and holy inclination in them? I question if he will affirm this. Does he mean, that this supposed grace does any thing *effectual* towards making them willing? No such thing. What, then, does he mean? Nothing, that I can comprehend, more than this—That men may come to Christ, *if they will.* His whole scheme of grace, therefore, amounts to no more than our natural ability. We admit that men in general are possessed of this ability; but, then, we have no notion of calling it *grace.* If we must be accountable beings, we apprehend this to be no more than an exercise of *justice.* And, in fact, our opponents, whatever terms they use, think the same; for, though they call it grace, and so would seem to mean that it is something for which we had no claim, yet the constant drift of their writings proves, that they mean no such thing; for they, all along, plead that it would be unjust and cruel in God to withhold it, and yet to treat them as accountable beings. P. does not scruple to compare it to the conduct of an Egyptian task-master, who required brick without straw. What end, therefore, they can have in calling this power by the name of *grace*, it is difficult to say, unless it be to avoid the odium of seeming to ascribe to divine grace nothing at all.

For my part, I apprehend that, whatever grace is provided for, or bestowed upon men, they are altogether inexcusable, without any consideration of that nature whatever. Some of the principal reasons for which are as follow:—1. The term *grace* implies that the subject is totally unworthy, altogether inexcusable, and destitute of any claim; and all this, previous to, and independent of, its bestowment: otherwise grace is no more grace. 2. The heathen, in their ignorance of God, are said to be *without excuse:* and that, not from the consideration of grace bestowed upon them: unless by "grace" is meant simply the means of knowledge by the works of creation, answering to the testimony of conscience within them. *That which may be known of God*, says the Apostle, *is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invi-*

*sible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.** 3. The manner in which the godly have prayed for *grace* to fulfil their *duty*, and to preserve them from *sin*, shows that they considered themselves as obliged to duty, and as liable to sin, antecedently to its bestowment. *Thou hast commanded us that we should keep thy precepts diligently: O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!—We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself helpeth our infirmities.—Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.—O that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!—Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins: then shall I be innocent from the great transgression.*† 4. Fallen angels are under a moral inability to love God, or to do any thing that is really good, and no grace is provided for them; yet they are without excuse.

P. informs us of some unsuccessful conferences which he has frequently had with unconverted sinners, in endeavouring, upon Calvinistic principles, to fix blame upon their consciences. (p. 60.) If I had had the pleasure of being a bystander in one or more of those conferences, I imagine I should have seen a very *easy* conquest: and no wonder; people seldom manage to the best advantage those principles which they do not believe. We too often see this exemplified, when a controversy is written in the form of a dialogue.

I do not apprehend that P. intended to plead the cause of the infernal legions in their *continued* enmity to, and rebellion against the Most High; but, if I am not greatly mistaken, the purport of his reasoning is fully of that tendency. There is only one particular wanting; viz. deriving their depravity from a predecessor, to render all their iniquities, according to his reasoning, entirely excusable. They cannot *now* find in their hearts to do aught but evil: and, no grace being bestowed upon them to deliver them, wherein can consist their

* Rom. i. 19, 20.

† Psa. cxix. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 26. Psa. xvii. 5. 2 Chron. iv. 10. Psa. xix. 13.

blame? It is true, each of them brought his depravity upon himself, without deriving it from another; and this may prove them to have been to blame in their *first revolt*, but not *in any thing that follows*. They sinned, to be sure, *at* the beginning: but, if the reasoning of P. be just, I do not see how they can have sinned *from* it. He insists upon it, that, in these cases, there is no difference between a natural and moral inability; "for what we cannot do, we cannot do." (p. 60.) Now, in all cases of natural inability, the party is excusable, even though he may, by his own fault, have brought that inability upon himself. If a man, by debauchery, or excess, bring upon himself an utter disability for all future employment; it is not *then* his duty to do the same business which it was before. It is true, it does not excuse his former intemperance; for in that he was to blame: but it excuses his present cessation from business: for that he is not to blame; nor can any person blame him. This will hold good in all cases of natural ability whatever; and, if there is no difference between that and what is of a moral nature, the same reasoning will apply to the fallen angels. They were certainly to blame for their first revolt, by which they contracted their inability; but how can they be to blame for continuing what they are? Their propensity to evil is now become invincible, and no grace is bestowed upon them, to deliver them from it; how, then, can they be to blame? And if truth is of a like force in all places, and at all times, why should not the ploughboy's argument, as it is called, "What we cannot do, we cannot do," be as *irrefragable* in the language of an apostate angel, as of an apostate man?

SECTION III.

ON FAITH IN CHRIST BEING A REQUIREMENT OF THE MORAL LAW.

I FIND it difficult to come at the real sentiments of P. touching the moral law. Sometimes, he speaks of it as "an invariable rule of human conduct, and infallible test of right and wrong;" (p. 67.) at other times, he speaks of it as wholly abrogated; as if final misery was not brought upon sinners by their transgression of the law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy." (p. 86.) In his Ninth Letter, he admits that men "are bound, as subjects of God's moral government, to embrace whatever he reveals." (p. 89.) One should think, that, if so, a rejection of the overtures of mercy must *itself* be a transgression of the law. And yet he, all along, speaks of our obligations to obey the gospel as arising, if not wholly, yet chiefly, from the gospel itself. He does not seem willing to deny the thing in full; for he cautiously uses the terms "wholly and chiefly:" and yet, if his arguments, especially from the contrary nature of the two dispensations, (p. 90.) from the silence of scripture, &c. &c. prove any thing, they will prove, that our obligations to obey the gospel must arise wholly and *entirely* from the gospel itself, and not from the moral law.*

The purport of all the reasoning of P. on this subject supposes me to maintain, THAT MEN ARE EXHORTED AND INVITED TO SUCH AND SUCH THINGS, MERELY AS MATTER OF DUTY, WITHOUT ANY PROMISE OF SALVATION ON THEIR COMPLIANCE. Hence he speaks of "binding men down in chains of darkness;" of their "seeking the salvation of their souls in vain;" (p. 46.) with various things of the kind: whereas I have giv-

* That there is a sense in which our obligation to comply with the gospel does arise from the gospel itself, is allowed. On this subject I have given my thoughts in the former treatise, p. 41.

en sufficient proof of the contrary throughout the former treatise; particularly in pp. 102—104. It is, all along, supposed that eternal salvation is promised by a faithful God to any and every exercise of what is spiritually good; and that, if every sinner who hears the gospel were truly to come to Christ for salvation, every such sinner would undoubtedly be saved.

It must be upon this mistaken supposition, that P. denies the gospel upon our principles to be in itself "good news." (p. 92.) or, in its own nature, a "real privilege." (p. 87.) But, unless the aversion of men's hearts from embracing the gospel, (if grace is not provided, to enable them to do so,) makes that to be no privilege which would otherwise be so, such a consequence cannot justly be imputed to our sentiments. This, however, will not be admitted: yet P. seems to take it for granted, and proceeds to draw consequences from it, as an undoubted truth.

There is some force in what P. has advanced on the subject of *trust;* (p. 32.) and, for any thing I yet perceive, he is in the right in supposing that the venture of the four lepers into the Syrian camp could not properly be called by that name. It should be considered, however, that the above case, which I produced for illustration, was not designed as a *perfect representation* of a sinner's application to Christ. I never supposed it possible for a soul to apply to Christ, and be disappointed. Whether the resolution of the lepers can be called *trust*, or not, it never was my design to prove that a sinner has no greater encouragement to apply to Christ than they had in their proposed application to the Syrians. On the contrary, the purport of the argument in that place was thus expressed: "If it would be right to venture, even in such a case as that, surely Christ's having promised, saying, *Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out*, cannot make it otherwise. (p. 133.)

I admit, there is no doubt of a sinner's acceptance, who, from his heart, applies at the feet of Christ, as one who is utterly lost, and righteously condemned; yet I do not feel the force of my opponent's censure, when, speaking of coming to Christ with a '*Peradventure he will save my life*,' he calls it the mere language of *heathenism*. A heathen's having used such

language does not prove it to be the mere language of *heathenism:* nor is it so. Peter exhorted the sorcerer, saying, *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness,* IF PERHAPS *the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.** Though there be no doubt of one who truly comes to Christ being accepted, yet there may be some doubt concerning a person's coming in the spirit of the gospel; and I believe it is not usual for a person, on his first application to Christ, to be able to decide upon that matter. On these accounts, I should think it is usual for a sinner, on his first application to the Saviour, to pray to the Lord, *if so be* that the evils of his heart and life may be forgiven him. It is not the way of a contrite sinner to come as a claimant, but as a suppliant: *He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.*†

Trust, according to my present apprehensions, when used to express faith in Christ, refers, like that, to a divine *testimony*, or *promise.* That for which every sinner who hears the gospel ought to trust in Christ is this; that, *if he truly come to him, he shall surely be accepted of him;* for this is *testified*, or *promised.* He ought not so to trust in Christ, as to depend upon being saved by him, whether he come to him in the spirit of the gospel or not, (for that would be trusting in a falsehood,) but so as to give up every false object of confidence, and make trial of the divine veracity.

If there is any difference between the manner in which a sinner *ought* to trust in Christ, and in which a saint *does* trust in him, it appears to be this; the former ought to trust in God's promise, that, IF *he come, he shall be accepted*, and so make the trial; the latter may be conscious that he HAS *come to Christ*, and *does* fall in with his gospel and government; and, if so, he trusts in his promise for *the happy issue.* There are seasons, however, in which true saints are in great darkness about their evidences for glory. At those times, they find it necessary to exercise renewed acts of trust on Christ in the manner *first* described. Not possessing a certain consciousness that they do fall in with his gospel and government, all they can do is to consider, that the promise is still in force, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out;* and so make trial afresh of the Redeemer's veracity.

* Acts viii. 22. † Lam. iii. 29.

P. seems to think, that his sentiments lay a proper foundation for trust, to every poor sinner; and that ours do not. But what has any sinner to trust in upon his principles, more than upon ours? According to our principles, any sinner may trust that he shall be saved, *if he come to Christ:* and what do his do more? They do not warrant a sinner to trust that he shall be saved, *whether he come to Christ or not;* for, though P. supposes Christ died for all, yet he maintains that many of those for whom he died will finally perish. I see no advantage whatever, therefore, attending his scheme, in laying a more solid and extensive foundation for a sinner's trust than ours.

If I am not very much mistaken, P. has greatly confounded two very different things; viz. an *obligation* and an *encouragement* to believe. The one, I suppose, arises from the moral law; the other from the gospel. That the *encouragements* held out to sinners to return to God by Jesus Christ belong to the law, is what I never affirmed. P. has quoted various scriptures, in his Ninth Letter, of an encouraging nature; and these, doubtless, are the language of the gospel. But the question is, does our *obligation* to believe arise from these encouragements, or from the *injunctions* with which they are connected? The encouragement of the prodigal to return, and make a frank acknowledgment to his father, arose from his father's well-known clemency, and there being bread enough in his house, and to spare; but that was not the ground of his obligation. It had been right and fit for him to have returned, whether such a ground of encouragement had existed, or not.

As to those encouragements being improper without *a provision of mercy:* if it were possible for any returning sinner to be refused admittance for a want of a sufficiency in the death of Christ, this might be admitted, but not else. And, if by a provision of mercy is meant no more than a provision of pardon to all who believe, and supposing, for argument's sake, every man in the world should return to God in Christ's name, that they would all be accepted, I have no objections to it. At the same time, it is insisted, that no man ever did come to Christ, or ever can find in his heart to do so, but whom the Father draws. But more of this hereafter: at present, I shall

offer a few arguments for the following position;—Though the *encouragements* of a sinner to come to Christ arise wholly from the gospel, yet his *obligation* so to do arises from the moral law.

I. All obligation must arise from *some law*. If, therefore, our obligations to believe in Christ do not arise from the moral law, they must arise from the gospel as a *new law:* but the gospel, as P. admits, is simply *good news;* (p. 5.) and *news*, whether good or bad, relates not to precepts or injunctions, but to *tidings* proclaimed.

II. Sin is defined, by an inspired apostle, to be *the transgression of the law*.* If this be a perfect definition, it must extend to *all sin;* and consequently to *unbelief*, or a rejection of God's way of salvation. But, if unbelief be a transgression of the law, faith, which is the opposite, must be one of its requirements.

III. If love to God *includes* faith in Christ wherever he is revealed by the gospel, then the moral law, which expressly requires the former, must also require the latter. In proof that love to God includes faith in Christ, I ask leave to refer the reader to pages 39—41, and 81—84, of the former treatise.

P. allows my "reasonings on the extent of the moral law, in pages 121, 122, are very conclusive;" but what he calls "analogical reasonings, in this and other places, from the law to the gospel, he cannot think to be equally conclusive, unless the dispensation of the law, and that of the gospel were the same." (p. 67.) If I understand what he refers to by analogical reasonings, it is the argument contained in those pages to which I have just now referred the reader. I might here ask, Is what was advanced in those pages answered? I do not recollect that any thing like an answer to it is attempted by any one of my opponents. If the reasoning is inconclusive, I should suppose its deficiency is capable of being detected. Let P. or any other person prove, if he is able, that supreme love to God would not *necessarily* lead a fallen creature, who has heard the gospel of Christ, to embrace him as God's way of salvation; or let him invalidate those arguments in the

* 1 John iii. 4.

pages referred to, in which the contrary is maintained. Let him consider also, whether, if he succeed, he will not, in so doing, invalidate the reasoning of our Lord to the Jews, *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.**

That the law and the gospel are two very different dispensations, is allowed. The one is a mere inefficient rule, requiring what is right, but giving no disposition to a compliance; the other provides for the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, by which we are renewed in the spirit of our mind. The gospel makes effectual provision for the *producing* of those dispositions which the law simply *requires*. The law condemns the sinner, the gospel justifies him. On these accounts, the former is fitly called *the* LETTER *which* KILLETH, and the latter *the* SPIRIT *which* GIVETH LIFE.† For these reasons also, with others, the gospel is a *better* covenant. All this may be allowed, without making it a new law, requiring a kind of obedience that shall be within the compass of a carnal mind, and different in its nature from that required by the moral law.

IV. Unbelievers will be accused and convicted by Moses: their unbelief must, therefore, be a breach of the law of Moses. After our Lord had complained of the Jews, that *they would not come unto him, that they might have life;* that though he was come in his *Father's name, yet they received him not;* he adds, *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even* MOSES, *in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.*‡ It is very plain, I think, from this passage, that the thing for which Moses would accuse them was a rejection of Christ and the way of salvation by him; which, according to our Lord's reasoning, implied a rejection of the writings of Moses.§ From hence, therefore, it is inferred, that a compliance with the gospel is what the law of Moses requires, and a non-com-

* John v. 42, 43. † 2 Cor. iii. 6. ‡ John v. 45.

§ By Moses' accusing them, I apprehend, is meant the *law* of Moses, which condemns the Jews to this present time, for not believing in that prophet whom Moses foretold, Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

pliance with it is a matter for which that law will accuse and condemn.*

P. has brought many proofs of the invitations of scripture being *enforced* on gospel principles. This is a matter I should never have thought of denying. But, if an invitation to believe in Christ, enforced by gospel motives, will prove that faith is not a requirement of the moral law, then invitations to love God, to fear him, and to lie low before him, enforced in the same manner, will prove the same of them. Love, fear, and humility, are enforced upon gospel principles, as well as faith in Christ. Things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and of which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, are prepared for them who *love* God. The exhortations to *fear* God are not more numerous than the promises of mercy to those who are of such a spirit. Men are exhorted

* If I understand P. he considers the moral law as a system of government now no longer in force; and the gospel as a new system of government, more suited to the state of fallen creatures, which has taken place of it: for he supposes, that "final misery is not now brought upon men by their transgression of the moral law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy." (p. 86.) Final misery, we are sure, must be brought upon men by *sin*, be it against what law it may; and, whatever law it is the breach of which subjects us to final misery, that must be the law that we are under. If this is not the moral law, then men are not under that law, nor can it be to us "the standard of right and wrong." If the gospel be a new system of government, taking place of the moral law, then all the precepts, prohibitions, promises, and threatenings, the neglect of which subjects men to final misery, must belong to the former, and not to the latter.

How far these sentiments accord with the scripture account of either law or gospel, let the reader judge. Let it be considered also, whether it is not much more consistent with both, to conceive of the former as the guardian of the latter, enjoining whatever regards are due to it, and punishing every instance of neglect and contempt of it. Such a view of things accords with the passage in John v. just cited, and is in nowise contradicted by those scriptures to which we are referred in page 86. On the contrary, one of those passages, viz. 2 Thes. i. 8. in my opinion, tends to establish it, and is in direct contradiction to the hypothesis of P. Vengeance is said to be taken on men, not *merely* for their disobedience to the gospel, but, as well, for their *ignorance of God*, which is distinguished from the other, and is manifestly a breach of the moral law.

to *humble* themselves under the mighty hand of God, with the encouragement that he will lift them up. These are all gospel motives; yet P. will not deny that the dispositions enforced are requirements of the moral law. Even *relative duties*, such as those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, &c. which certainly are of a moral nature, are, nevertheless, enforced by gospel motives.

But "How can the gospel answer the end of recovering miserable men," it is asked, "if it contain *new injunctions*, equally impossible, if not more so, than the moral law itself; and these injunctions enforced by more awful punishments?" (p. 93.) I might ask in return, How can the gospel have a tendency to recover *sinful* men from their *evil propensities*, if it is a kind of law which requires only such exercises with which those propensities may consist? It can have no such tendency, unless tolerating an evil has a tendency to destroy it.

'But is not the gospel adapted, as a mean, to recover lost sinners?' Yes, it is. By the cross of Christ, it exhibits the *evil of sin* in stronger colours than all the curses of the law could paint it; and so has a tendency, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, *to convince the world of sin*. Nor is this all: it exhibits a *Saviour* to the guilty soul, to keep him from despair, which, at the same time, tends to conquer his heart with a view of God's free and self-moved goodness. A person thus conquered would admire the free and sovereign grace of the gospel, but he would abhor the thought of a gospel that should make Jehovah stoop to the vile *inclinations* of his apostate creatures. His prayer would be, not, 'Incline thy testimonies to my heart;' but, 'my heart to thy testimonies.'

But "Could the gospel have a tendency to recover lost sinners, if it contained *new injunctions* equally impossible, if not more so than the moral law itself?" I own, I think it could not. And who supposes it could? Surely P. must have here forgotten himself. Does he not know that those are his own sentiments, rather than mine; so far, however, as relates to the gospel containing *new injunctions!* I suppose the gospel, strictly speaking, to contain no injunctions at all, but merely the good tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ; and that, whatever precepts or injunctions are to be found re-

specting its being embraced, they are the diversified language of the moral law, which obliges men, as P. himself allows, to "embrace whatever God reveals." (p. 89.)

Sometimes, the word *gospel* is used in a large sense, for the whole of the Christian dispensation, as contained in the New-Testament, or the whole of that religion taught by Christ and his apostles, whether doctrinal or practical. In this use of the word, we sometimes speak of *the precepts of the gospel.* But, when the term gospel is used in a strict sense, it denotes merely the *good news* proclaimed to lost sinners through the mediation of Christ. In this view, it stands opposed to the moral law, and, in itself, contains no injunctions at all. If the gospel were a new system of government taking place of the moral law, one should think there would be no farther need of the latter; whereas Christ, in his sermon on the mount, maintained its perpetuity, and largely explained and enforced its precepts. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

SECTION IV.

ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE extent of Christ's death is well known to have been a matter of great controversy. For my part, I cannot pretend to so much reading upon the subject, as to be fully acquainted with the arguments used on either side. If I write any thing about it, it will be a few plain thoughts, chiefly the result of reading the sacred scriptures.

I think no one can imagine, that I am under any obligation, from the laws of controversy, to follow P. into a long and laboured defence of the limited extent of Christ's death. All that can be reasonably thought incumbent upon me is, to treat of it so far as respects its consistency or inconsistency with in-

definite invitations. On this score, I might very well be excused from entering upon any defence of the subject itself, or answering the arguments advanced for the contrary. Whatever notice is taken of either, will be rather in compliance with what has been done by my opponent, than in conformity to the laws of disputation.

I suppose P. is not ignorant, that Calvinists in *general* have considered the particularity of redemption as consisting, not in the *degree* of Christ's sufferings, (as though he must have suffered more, if more had been finally saved,) or in any *insufficiency* that attended them, but in the sovereign purpose and design of the Father and the Son, whereby they were constituted or appointed the price of redemption, the objects of that redemption ascertained, and the ends to be answered by the whole transaction determined. They suppose the sufferings of Christ, in themselves considered, are of *infinite* value, sufficient to have saved all the world, and a thousand worlds, if it had pleased God to have constituted them the price of their redemption, and to have made them effectual to that end. Farther; whatever difficulties there may appear in these subjects, they, in general, suppose that there is in the death of Christ a sufficient ground for indefinite calls and universal invitations; and that there is no mockery, or insincerity, in the Holy One in any one of these things.*

These views of the subject accord with my own. I know

* "The obedience and sufferings of Christ," says Witsius, "considered in themselves, are, on account of the infinite dignity of the person, of that value as to have been sufficient for redeeming not only all and every man in particular, but many myriads besides, had it so pleased God and Christ that he should have undertaken and satisfied for them." And again, "The obedience and sufferings of Christ are of such worth, that all, without exception, who come to him, may find perfect salvation in him: and it was the will of God that this truth should, without distinction, be proposed both to them that are to be saved, and to them that are to perish: with a *charge* not to neglect so great salvation, but to repair to Christ with true contrition of soul; and with a most *sincere* declaration, that all who come to him shall find salvation in him. John vi. 40." *Œconomy*, Vol. I. Chap. IX. To the same purpose speaks Peter Du Moulin, in his *Anatomy of Arminianism*, Chap. XXVII. § 9. And Dr. Owen, in his *Death of Death*, Book IV. Chap. I. also in his *Display of Arminianism*, Chap. IX.

not but that there is the same objective fulness and sufficiency in the obedience and sufferings of Christ, for the salvation of sinners, as there is in the power of the Holy Spirit for their renovation: both are infinite; yet both are applied under the direction of infinite wisdom and uncontrollable sovereignty. It is allowed, that the death of Christ has opened a way whereby God can, consistently with his justice, forgive any sinner whatever, who returns to him by Jesus Christ. If we were to suppose, for argument's sake, that all the inhabitants of the globe should thus return, it is supposed not one soul need be sent away, for want of a sufficiency in Christ's death to render his pardon and acceptance consistent with the rights of justice. But, great and necessary as this mercy is, if nothing more than this had been done, not one of the human race had ever been saved. It is necessary to our salvation, that a *way* and an *highway* to God should be opened; Christ is such a way, and is as free for any sinner to walk in, as any highway whatever from one place to another; but, considering the depravity of human nature, it is equally necessary that some effectual provision should be made for our *walking* in that way.* We conceive, that the Lord Jesus Christ made such a provision by his death, thereby procuring the certain bestowment of faith, as well as all other spiritual blessings which follow upon it; that, in regard of all the *sons* who are finally brought to glory, he was the *surety*, or *captain*, of their salvation; that their salvation was, properly speaking, the end, or design, of his death. And herein, we suppose, consists the particularity of redemption.

I think I might reduce all that is necessary to be said upon this subject to two questions—*First:* Had our Lord Jesus Christ any *absolute determination*, in his death, to save any of the human race? *Secondly:* Supposing such a determination to exist concerning some, which does not exist concerning others, is this consistent with indefinite calls and universal invitations? The discussion of these two questions will contain the substance of what I shall advance upon the subject; but,

* I use the metaphor of a *way*, the rather because it conveys an idea sufficiently clear; and is frequently applied to Christ in the scriptures. John xiv. 4—6. Isa. xxxv. 8. Jer. vi. 16.

as pretty much is required to be said, I shall subdivide the whole into *four* lesser sections.

§ 1. Containing a discussion of the first question, Whether our Lord Jesus Christ had any absolute determination in his death to save any of the human race?

If the affirmative of this question be proved; if it be shown that Christ *had* such an absolute purpose in his death; the limited extent of that purpose must follow of course. The reason is plain: an *absolute* purpose must be effectual. If it extended to all mankind, all mankind would certainly be saved. Unless, therefore, we will maintain the final salvation of all mankind, we must either suppose a limitation to the absolute determination of Christ to save, or deny any such determination to exist. The scheme of P. concurs with the latter, supposing that by the death of Christ a mere conditional provision of redemption is made for all mankind. I own I think otherwise; some of the reasons for which are as follows:

I. The *promises* made to Christ of the certain efficacy of his death. One of our grand objections to the scheme of P. is, that, in proportion as he extends the objects for whom Christ died beyond those who are actually saved, he diminishes the *efficacy* of his death, and renders all the promises concerning it of no account. His scheme, instead of making redemption universal, supposes that Christ's death did not properly redeem any man, nor render the salvation of any man a matter of certainty. It only procured an offer of redemption and reconciliation to mankind in general. We apprehend this is diminishing the efficacy of Christ's death, without answering any valuable end. Nor is this all: such an hypothesis appears, to us, utterly inconsistent with all those scriptures where God the Father is represented as *promising* his Son a reward for his sufferings in the salvation of poor sinners. God the Father engaged, saying, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast (or shalt have) the dew of thy youth.* Yes: he engaged that he should *see his seed;* that *the pleasure of Jehovah should prosper in his hand;* that he should *see of the travail of his soul, and be*

satisfied; and by his knowledge, it was added, *shall my righteous servant justify many*, FOR *he shall bear their iniquities.* It was promised to Christ, as the reward of his sufferings, that *kings should see, and arise: princes also*, it was added, *shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful; and the Holy One of Israel shall choose thee: thus saith* JEHOVAH, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people; to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth, and to them that sit in darkness, Show yourselves.—Behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim!** But what security, I ask, was there for the fulfilment of these promises, but upon the supposition of the certain salvation of some of the human race? How could it be certain that Christ should *justify many*, if there was no effectual provision made that *any* should *know* and believe in him? and what propriety was there in assigning his *bearing their iniquities* as his REASON and EVIDENCE of it, if there is no necessary connexion between our iniquities being borne away, and our persons being justified?

II. The *characters* under which Christ died. He laid down his life as a *shepherd;* and for whom should we expect him to die *in that character?* For the *sheep*, no doubt. So the scriptures inform us: *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I lay down my life for the sheep.* Those for whom Christ laid down his life are represented as being his sheep, prior to their coming to the fold. *These*, saith the blessed Redeemer, *I must bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* As sheep are committed into the hands of a shepherd, and as he becomes responsible for their preservation or restoration, so Christ is represented as the *great shepherd of the sheep*, whose blood was shed by *covenant;* and who, by fulfilling that covenant, was entitled to a discharge, which, as the representative of those for whom he died, he enjoyed in his resurrection from the dead.†

* Psa. cx. 3. Isa. liii. 10, 11. xlix. 7—9. 12.

† John x. 11. 15, 16. Heb. xiii. 20.

Again: Christ laid down his life as a *husband;* and for whom should we expect him to die in *that character?* For his bride, surely. So the scriptures inform us: *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.* The love of a husband, of which his death is here supposed to be the RESULT, is certainly *discriminating.* If it is said, 'True; but *the church* here means actual believers;' I reply, If they were actual believers, I should suppose they were not *unsanctified;* for faith purifies the heart: but Christ *gave himself, that he might sanctify them with the washing of water by the word.* Besides, he did not die for believers, *as such;* for, *while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us:* but he died for the church, *as such* considered. This is evident, for that his death is represented as resulting from his love, which he exercises as a *husband.* I conclude, therefore, *the church* cannot, in this place, be understood of those only who actually believed.*

Again: Christ laid down his life as a *surety.* He is expressly called *the surety of a better testament.* He needed not to be a surety in the behalf of the Father, to see to the fulfilment of the promises, seeing there was no possibility of his failing in what he had engaged to bestow; but there was danger on our part. Ought we not, therefore, to suppose, that, after the example of the high-priest under the law, Christ was a surety *for the people, to God?* and, if so, we cannot extend the objects for whom he was a surety, beyond those who are finally saved, without supposing him to fail in what he has undertaken. In perfect conformity with these sentiments, the following scriptures represent our Lord Jesus, I apprehend, as having undertaken the certain salvation of all those for whom he lived and died. *It became him for whom are all things—in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* He died, not for the Jewish nation only, *but that he might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad —The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same.—Here am I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me.* Though we receive not the *power,* or

* Ephes. v. 25, 26.

privilege, to become the sons of God till after we believe in Christ; yet, from *before the foundation of the world*, were we *predestinated to the adoption of children*, by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; and so, in the esteem of God, were considered as *children*, even while as yet we lay *scattered abroad* under the ruins of the fall.*

Once more: Christ laid down his life as a *sacrifice of atonement;* and for whom did the priests under the law offer up the sacrifice? For those, surely, on whose behalf it was *sanctified*, or set apart for that purpose. Some of the Jewish sacrifices were to make atonement for the sin of an individual; others for the sins of the whole nation: but every sacrifice had its special appointment, and was supposed to atone for the sins of those, and those only, on whose behalf it was offered. Now, Christ, being about to offer himself a sacrifice for sin, spake on this wise: *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.* 'For their sakes,' as though he had said, 'who were *given* me of the Father, I set myself apart as a victim to vengeance, that I may consecrate and present them faultless before the presence of my Father.'†

III. Such *effects* are ascribed to the death of Christ as do not terminate upon all mankind. Those for whom Christ died are represented as being *redeemed* by the shedding of his blood: *He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*‡ But redemption includes *the forgiveness of sin;* (Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14.) and we know that to be a blessing which does not terminate upon all mankind.§ Far-

* Heb. vii. 22. ii. 10. 13, 14. John xi. 52. i. 12. Ephes. i. 4, 5.

† John xvii. 9. 19. ‡ Gal. iii. 13.

§ P. I suppose, has felt the force of this reasoning heretofore, and, therefore, if I am rightly informed, he disowns a *universal redemption*; supposing that, properly speaking, Christ did not, by laying down his life, redeem any man; that no person can be said to have been redeemed, till he has believed in Christ. It is true, we receive this blessing when we believe, as we then *receive the atonement.* It is then that we *have* redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: but, as it does not follow from our receiving the atonement when we believe, that atonement was not properly made when Christ hung upon the cross,

ther: it is not only ascribed to the death of Christ that pardon and acceptance are procured for all who return in his name; but any return at all is attributed to the same cause: *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* He gave himself for the church, *that he might sanctify and cleanse it.* Our old man is said to be *crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.* But we see not these effects produced upon all mankind; nor are all mankind his peculiar people.*

IV. Christ is said to have borne the sins of *many;* and the blood of the new covenant was shed for *many*, for the remission of sins.† The term *many*, it is allowed, when opposed to *one*, or to *few*, is sometimes used for an unlimited number: in one such instance, it is put for all mankind. But it is self-evident, that, when no such opposition exists, it is always used for a limited number, and generally stands opposed to *all.* Who the *many* are, in Isa. liii. 12. whose sins he bare, may be known by comparing it with the verse foregoing: *By his knowledge* (that is, *by the knowledge of him*) *shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death: he was numbered with the transgres-*

so neither does it follow from our *having* redemption when we believe, that Christ did not properly redeem us when he laid down his life. Certain it is, that the passage before cited (Gal. iii. 13.) refers not to what takes place on our believing, but to what was done at the time when Christ was made a curse for us by hanging upon the tree.

Though I apprehend for the reasons above, that being redeemed from the curse of the law does not necessarily suppose the subject to be in the actual possession of that blessing; yet, to understand it of any thing less than such a virtual redemption as effectually secured our enjoyment of deliverance in the fulness of time, is to reduce it to no meaning at all. We must either allow it to mean thus much, or say, with P. that Christ, in laying down his life for us, did not redeem any man; but this, at present, appears, to me, to be contradicting, rather than explaining, scripture.

* Titus ii. 14. Ephes. v. 26. Rom. vi. 6.

† Isa. liii. 12. Matt. xxvi. 18.

sors, he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. There is no reason, that I know of, to be given, why the *many*, whose sins he bare, should be understood of any other persons than the *many* who by his knowledge are justified, and who, it must be allowed, are not all mankind.

V. The *intercession* of Christ, which is founded upon his death, and expressive of its grand design, extends not to all mankind: *I pray for them:* says Christ, *I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me, for they are thine.** The intercession of the priests under the law, so far as I know, was always in behalf of the same persons for whom the oblation was offered. The persons prayed for by our Lord must either mean those who were *then believers*, to the exclusion of the unbelieving world; or, all who *should*, at any period of time, believe, to the exclusion of those who should finally perish. That Christ prayed for those who then believed in him, is granted; but that his intercession was confined to them, and excluded all that did not believe in him, cannot be admitted, for the following reasons: 1. Christ prays for all that were *given* him of the Father: but the term *given* is not applied to believers *as such:* for men are represented as *given* of the Father, prior to their coming to Christ. John vi. 37. 2. The scripture account of Christ's intercession does not confine it to those who are actually believers, which it must have done, if the sense I oppose be admitted. When he hung upon the cross, he prayed for his *enemies;* and, herein, most evidently fulfilled that prophecy: *He poured out his soul unto death, he was numbered with the transgressors, he bare the sin of many, and* MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS.† 3. It is expressly said, in verse 20, *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who* SHALL *believe in me through their word.*

VI. If the doctrine of eternal, personal, and unconditional *election* be a truth, that of a special design in the death of Christ must necessarily follow. I do not suppose P. will admit the first; but I apprehend he will admit, that, if the first could be proved a scripture-truth, the last would follow of course. I might then urge all those scriptures and arguments

* John xvii. 9. † Luke xxiii. 34. Isa. liii. 12.

which appear, to me, to prove the doctrine of election. But this would carry me beyond my present design. I only say, the following scriptures, among many others, appear, to me, to be conclusive upon that subject, and such as cannot be answered without a manifest force being put upon them. *God the Father hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.—God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.—All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me.—Whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.—I have much people in this city.—As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.—Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.—Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.—Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.—I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.—Except the Lord of hosts had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.—At this present time also there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.—I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.**

The above passages must be allowed to speak only of *a part* of mankind. This part of mankind must be styled the

* Ephes. i. 3, 4. 2 Thes. ii. 13. John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Acts xviii. 10. xiii. 48. 1 Pet. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9. John xv. 16. Matt. xi. 25, 26. Rom. ix. 15, 16. 29. xi. 5. 7.

chosen of God, *given* of the Father, &c. either because of their actually being believers, *or* because it was foreseen that they would believe, or, as we suppose, because God eternally purposed in himself that they should believe, and be saved. It cannot be on account of the *first;* seeing they were chosen *before the foundation of the world*, and given to Christ prior to their believing in him. It cannot be on account of the *second;* because, then, what he had done for us must have been according to something good in us, and not according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. It would also be contrary to all those scriptures recited above, which represent our being chosen, and given of the Father, as the *cause* of faith and holiness. If our *conformity to the image of the Son of God*, our *faith*, *holiness*, and *obedience*, are the *effects* of election, they cannot be the ground, or reason of it. If men are given to Christ prior to the consideration of their coming to him, then they cannot be said to be given on account of their so coming. If, then, it cannot be on account of either the *first* or the *second*, I conclude it must be on account of the *last*.

The death of Christ is assigned as a reason why none, at the last day, shall be able to lay any thing to the *charge* of God's *elect*.* But, if it extends equally to those who are condemned as to those who are justified, how does it become a security against such a charge? Whatever difference there may be, in point of security, between those who, at that day, are justified, and those who are condemned, the death of Christ is not supposed to have had any influence towards it. The security of the elect should rather have been ascribed to what they themselves have done in embracing the Saviour, than to any thing done by him; seeing what he did was no security whatever. It was no more than a cipher, in itself considered. The efficacy of the whole, it seems, rested, not upon what Christ had done, but upon what they themselves had done in believing in him.

VII. The character of the redeemed in the *world above* implies the sentiment for which we plead. Not only did the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders (which

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

seem to represent the church militant) adore the Lamb, saying, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;* but it is witnessed of those who are without fault before the throne of God, that *they were redeemed* (or *bought*) *from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.* But, if all of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, were bought by the blood of Christ, there could be no possibility of any being bought *from among* them.

The above are some of the reasons which induce me to think there was a certain, absolute, and, consequently, limited design in the death of Christ, securing the salvation of all those, and only those, who are finally saved. The reader will now judge of the confident manner in which P. asks, 'What end can it answer to take all these pains to vindicate a doctrine which God has never revealed?" (p. 36.)

§ 2. WHEREIN SOME NOTICE IS TAKEN OF THE ARGUMENTS OF P. FOR THE CONTRARY HYPOTHESIS.

The limited extent of Christ's death is said to be "inconsistent with divine *goodness*, and with the *tender mercies of God over all his works.*"* (p. 73.) To this it is replied, Fallen angels are a part of God's works, as well as fallen men; but Christ did not die for them: if, therefore, his death is to be considered as the criterion of divine goodness, and if the exercise of punitive justice is inconsistent with that attribute, then, suppose we were to admit that Christ died for all mankind, still the Psalmist's assertion cannot be true, and the difficulty is never the nearer being removed.

That God loves all mankind I make no doubt, and all the works of his hands, *as such* considered, fallen angels themselves not excepted; but the question is, whether he loves them *all alike;* and whether the exercise of punitive justice

* Surely, it is of vast importance to remember, that the death of Christ was intended not to prevent the divine character's being reproached on account of the strictness of his law in condemning *all* transgressors; but to prevent its being censured on account of the exemption of *any* transgressors from deserved punishment. Whatever considerations prove the necessity, or infinite expediency, of the atonement, must prove it was altogether optional, and an instance of infinite and sovereign goodness in God to provide a Lamb for a sin-offering. R.

be inconsistent with universal goodness? It is going great lengths, for a weak worm to take upon him to insist that divine goodness must be exercised in such a particular instance, or it can have no existence at all. I dare not say, there is no love, no goodness, in all the providences of God towards mankind, nor yet in his giving them the means of grace and the invitations of the gospel, though he does not do all for them which he *could* do, to incline them to embrace them, and has neither purposed nor provided for such an end. On the contrary, I believe these things, in themselves considered, to be instances of divine goodness, whatever the issue of them may be through men's depravity.

But, if Christ did not die for all mankind, it is said, "His tender mercies cannot be exercised towards them, no, not in the good things of this life; for these only increase their misery; nor in life itself; for every moment of it must be a dreadful curse." (p. 73.) But, horrid as these consequences may appear, a denier of God's *foreknowledge* would tell P. that the same consequences followed upon his own scheme, and in their full extent. He would say, 'You pretend to maintain the tender mercies of God over all his works; and yet you suppose him perfectly to know, before any of these works were brought into being, the part that every individual would act, and the consequent misery that would follow. He was sure that millions of the human race would so act, place them under what advantages he would, as that they would certainly involve themselves in such a condition that *it were better for them never to have been born.* He knew precisely who would come to such an end, as much as he will at the day of judgment. Why, then, did he bring them into existence? Surely they had better never have been born; or, if they must be born, why were they not cut off from the womb; seeing he was sure that every moment of time they existed would only increase their misery? Is this goodness? Are these his tender mercies?' . . . . I tremble while I write! For my part, I feel difficulties attend every thing I think about. I feel myself a poor worm of the dust, whose understanding is infinitely too contracted to fathom the ways and works of God. I wish to tremble and adore; and take comfort in this—that what I know not now, I shall know hereafter.

But "it is nowhere *expressly said* that Christ died only for a part of mankind." (p. 71.) It is expressly said that he gave himself that he might purify unto himself *a peculiar people;* that he laid down his life for *the sheep;* that he loved *the church*, and gave himself for it; that he died that he might gather together in one *the children of God* that were scattered abroad; and that those who are without fault before the throne of God, were bought *from among men.* But be it so, that we nowhere expressly read that Christ did not die to redeem all mankind; the scriptures do not so much deal in negatives, as in positives: their concern is not so much to inform mankind what is not done, as what is done. I know not that it is any where *expressly said*, that all mankind are not to be baptized; yet I suppose P. well understands that part of our Lord's commission to be restrictive.

There was no necessity for the apostles to publish the divine purposes to mankind in their addresses to them. These were not designed as a rule of action, either for the preachers or the hearers. It was sufficient for them both, that Christ was ready to pardon and accept of any sinner whatever, that should come unto him. It was equally sufficient, on the other hand, if, after people believed, they were taught those truths which relate to the purposes of grace on their behalf, with a view to cut off all glorying in themselves, and that they might learn to ascribe the whole *difference* between themselves and others to the mere sovereign grace of God. Hence it is, that the chief of those scriptures which we conceive to hold forth a limitation of design in the death of Christ, or any other doctrine of *discriminating* grace, are such as were addressed to believers.

But the main stress of the argument seems to lie in the meaning of such general expressions as *all men—world—whole world*, &c. If these are discussed, I suppose I shall be allowed to have replied to the substance of what P. has advanced; and that is all I can think of attending to.

It is admitted, as was before observed, that there is in the death of Christ a sufficient ground for indefinite calls and universal invitations; that God does invite mankind, without distinction, to return to him through the mediation of his Son, and promises pardon and acceptance to whomsoever

shall so return. There have been, and now are, many considerable writers, who are far from disowning the doctrine of particular redemption, (or, that the salvation of those who are saved is owing to an absolute, and consequently limited, design in the death of Christ,) who yet apprehend that a way is opened for sinners, without distinction, being invited to return to God, with the promise of free pardon on their return. And they suppose the above general expressions are intended to convey to us this idea. For my part, though I think with them in respect to the thing itself, yet I question if these general expressions are so to be understood. The terms *ransom*, *propitiation*, &c. appear, to me, to express more than this, and what is true only of those who are finally saved. To die *for us* appears, to me, to express the design, or intention, of the Redeemer. Christ's death effected a real *redemption*, *through which we are justified*. He *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*, and thereby secured the *blessing* to come upon us in due time.* Such a meaning, therefore, of the general expressions above-mentioned does not appear, to me, agreeable; much less can I accede to the sense put upon them by Philanthropos.

The rule of interpretation mentioned by P. (p. 76.) I approve. His sense of the passages referred to I apprehend to be "contradicted by other scriptures—contrary to the scope of the inspired writers—and what involves in it various absurdities."

The following observations are submitted to the judgment of the impartial reader.

I. It is the usual language of scripture, when speaking of the blessings of salvation extending to the Gentiles, to describe them in *indefinite terms*: *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.—And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.—And I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*, &c.—*Thy Maker is thy husband, (the Lord of hosts is his name;) the*

* Rom. iii. 24. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

*God of the whole earth shall he be called.—All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.—And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.—Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.—All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.—All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.**

These passages, with many others, express blessings which cannot be understood universally, as P. himself must acknowledge. Now, I ask, would not these furnish a contender for the universal and final salvation of all mankind with as good an argument as that which P. uses against us? Might he not say, "The subject in question can require no figures. Surely the great God could not intend to impose upon his poor, ignorant creatures. He could receive no *honour* from such an imposition. It would be no glory to you, Sir, to ensnare a fly or a gnat. We are infinitely more below Deity than a fly or a gnat is inferior to us. He cannot, then, be honoured by deceiving us. And we may say, with reverence, that his justice, and all his moral perfections, require that he should be explicit in teaching ignorant men on subjects of such importance as this?" (p. 40.)†

* Psa. lxv. 2. Isa. xl. 5. lxvi. 23. Joel ii. 28. Isa. liv. 5. Psa. xxii. 27. John xii. 32. Luke iii. 6. Psa. lxxxvi. 9. lxxii. 11. 7.

† P. speaks of *reverence:* and I have no doubt but that, in general, he feels it: but surely, in this place, he must have forgotten himself. Surely, a greater degree of sobriety would have become a creature so ignorant and insignificant as he describes himself, than to determine what kind of language God shall use in conveying his mind to men. There is no doubt but God's word, in all its parts, is sufficiently explicit. Every thing that relates to the *warrant* and *rule* of a sinner's application for salvation, especially, is plain and easy. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err. And, if some truths, which do not affect either his right to apply to the Saviour, or his hope of success on application, should be expressed in figurative language, I hope such a mode of expression will not be found to reflect upon the moral character of God.

II. The *time* in which the New Testament was written renders such a sense of the indefinite terms there used very possible and very probable. The Jews, it is well known, were, at that time, very tenacious of *exclusive privileges*. Their prejudices taught them to expect a Messiah, whose blessings should be confined to their own peculiar nation. The generality of even those who believed were exceedingly jealous, and found it hard work to relinquish their peculiar notions, and be reduced to a level with the Gentiles. It seems highly proper, therefore, that the Holy Spirit should, in some sort, cut off their vain pretensions; and this he did, not only by directing the apostles to the use of indefinite language, but by putting words into the mouth of Caiaphas, their own high-priest. He bore witness for God, though he meant no such thing, how that Jesus *should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one* THE CHILDREN OF GOD, THAT WERE SCATTERED ABROAD.*

III. The *scope* and *connexion* of several of the passages produced, countenance such an interpretation:

1 Tim. ii. 6. *He gave himself a ransom for all*, &c. This is a passage on which considerable stress is laid. The whole passage reads as follows: *I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

I wish, especially, that P. had written with more sobriety in what he says of God's "*deceiving* and *ensnaring* us." What deception is there in the case? Do we suppose it possible for a poor sinner, encouraged by the invitations of the gospel, to apply to Christ, and there meet with a repulse? No such thing. To what purpose, then, is it asked, "How can any man believe the promises of God, if he be not assured that God is in earnest, and means to fulfil them?" (p. 49.)

* John xi. 51, 52.

I allow it to be the revealed will of God, that every man who hears, or has opportunity to hear the gospel, should return to him by Jesus Christ; and whosoever so returns shall surely be saved. But I apprehend, let us understand by the *will* of God, in this place, what we may, we can never make it applicable to all men universally. By the *truth* which God will have all men to come to the knowledge of, is plainly intended that of *the one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;* which is here opposed to the notion of *many* gods and *many* mediators among the heathens. But in no sense can it be said to be God's will that all men universally should come to the knowledge of the *latter branch* of this truth, unless it be his will that millions of the human race should believe in him of whom they have never heard.

I should think the latter part of verses 6, 7, determines the meaning. The phrase, *to be testified* IN DUE TIME, doubtless refers to the gospel being preached among *all nations*, though not to all the individuals of any one nation, *before the end of the world.* Hence it follows, *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher—a teacher of the* GENTILES *in faith and verity.* 'God does not now,' as if the apostle had said, 'confine his church, as heretofore, amongst the Jews. Your prayers, hopes, and endeavours, must now extend over all the world. God will set up his kingdom in all the kingdoms of the earth. Seek the welfare and eternal salvation of men, therefore, without distinction of rank or nation. There is not a country under heaven which is not given to the Messiah for his inheritance; and he shall possess it *in due time.* In due time, the gospel shall be testified throughout all the world; for the ushering in of which glorious tidings I am appointed a *herald*, an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.'*

* *He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*—Whether the *ransom* of Christ extends farther than the *testimony* of the gospel, or not, is a question which I do not pretend to determine: be that, however, as it may, neither supposition will suit the scheme of P. If it does *not*, his point is given up. If it *does*, if it includes the whole heathen world, it is to be hoped they are somewhat the better for it, not only in this world, but in that to come. But, if so, either they must go to heaven without regeneration, or regeneration, in those cases, is not *by faith.*

I have seen nothing, at present, sufficient to convince me but that this is the meaning of 1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* John, the writer of the Epistle, was a Jew, an apostle of the *circumcision*, in connexion with Peter and James. (Gal. ii. 9.) The Epistles of Peter and James were each directed to the Jews; (1 Pet. i. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 1. James i. 1.) and Dr. Whitby acknowledges, concerning this Epistle,* that "it being written by an apostle of the circumcision, it is not doubted but it was written to the Jews." The same is intimated by several passages in the Epistle itself. The *fathers* to whom he writes (chap. ii. 13, 14.) knew Christ *from the beginning.* In verse 18 of the same chapter, he appears plainly to refer to our Lord's prophecies concerning the awful end of the Jewish nation, and to the false prophets that should come into the world previous to that event. He insists much upon Christ's being *come in the flesh;* which was a truth more liable to be denied by the Jews, than by the Gentiles. Finally: the term itself, which is rendered *propitiation*, plainly alludes to the Jewish *mercy-seat.* It is true, that many things in it will equally apply to Jews and Gentiles. Christ is the *advocate* of the one, as well as of the other: but that is no proof that the Epistle is not directed to believing Jews: as the same may be said of many things in the Epistle of James, which also is called a *catholic*, or *general* Epistle, though expressly addressed *to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad.*†

After all, I wish it to be considered, whether the text refer to any other than *believers* of either Jews or Gentiles. In my opinion, it does not; and, if so, the argument from it, in favour of the universal extent of Christ's death, is totally invalidated. My reasons for this opinion are as follow: the term *propitiation* is not put for what Christ is unto us, considered only as laying down his life, and offering himself a sacrifice,

* Preface to his *Annotations on the First Epistle of John.*

† Had not an argument been drawn from the *title* of this Epistle, in favour of its being written to both Jews and Gentiles, I should have taken no notice of it; as these *titles*, I suppose, were given to the Epistles by uninspired writers.

but for what he is unto us *through faith*. He is "set forth to be a *propitiation, through faith in his blood*."* He cannot therefore, one should think, be a propitiation to any but *believers*. There would be no propriety in saying of Christ, that he is set forth to be an expiatory sacrifice *through faith in his blood*, because he was a sacrifice for sin prior to the consideration of our believing in him. The text does not express what Christ *was*, as laying down his life, but what he *is* in consequence of it. Christ being our propitiation certainly *supposes* his being a sacrifice for sin; but it also supposes something more: it includes the idea of that sacrifice becoming *the medium of the forgiveness of sin, and of communion with God*. It relates, not to what has been called the impetration, but to the application of redemption. Christ is our propitiation in the same sense as he is *The Lord our righteousness*, which also is said to be *through faith*; but how he should be a propitiation *through faith* to those who have no faith, is difficult to conceive.

The truth seems to be this: Christ is that of which the Jewish mercy-seat (or propitiatory) was a type. The Jewish mercy-seat was the *medium of mercy and communion with God* for all the worshippers of God of old.† Christ is that in reality which this was in figure, and is not, like that, confined to a single nation. He is the medium through which *all believers*, of *all ages and nations*, have access to God, and receive the *forgiveness of their sins*. All this perfectly agrees with the scope of the Apostle, which was to encourage backslidden *believers* against despair.

Though it is here supposed the Apostle personates believing Jews, and that *the whole world* means the Gentiles; yet, if the contrary were allowed, the argument would not be thereby affected. Suppose him by *our sins* to mean *the sins of us who now believe, whether Jews or Gentiles*, still it amounts to the same thing; for then what follows is as if he had added, 'and not for ours only, but for the sins of all that ever came, or shall come, unto God by him from the beginning to the end of time.'

P. objects the want of other passages of scripture, in which

* Rom. iii. 25. † Exod. xxv. 22.

the term "*whole world* signifies the *elect*, or those that *believe*, or those that are saved, or any thing contradictory to the sense he has given." (p. 81.) The term *whole world* is certainly used in a limited sense by the Apostle Paul, when he says of the Christians at Rome, that their faith was spoken of *throughout the whole world*.* Though Rome, at that time was, in a sort, the metropolis of the known world, and those who professed Christianity in that famous city were more conspicuous than those who professed it in other places; yet there were many countries not then discovered, in which the news of their faith could not possibly have arrived. Besides, it is evident, from the drift of the Apostle, that the faith of the Romans was spoken of in a way of *commendation;* but it is not supposable, that the whole world universally would so speak of it. By the *whole world*, therefore, can be meant no more than the *believing* part of it in those countries where Christianity had begun to make its way. Farther: Christ is called *the God of the whole earth*.† The *whole earth* must here mean *believers;* as it expresses, not his universal government of the world, but his tender relation of a *husband*, which it was here foretold he should sustain towards the Gentile, as well as the Jewish church. Again; the gospel of Christ preached *in the world* is compared to leaven hid in three measures of meal till *the whole* was leavened.‡ This, doubtless, implies that the gospel, before it has finished its operations, shall spread throughout the *whole world*, and leaven it. But this will never be true of all the individuals in the world; for none but true *believers* are leavened by it.

But P. thinks the phrase *whole world*, in 1 John ii. 2. ought to be interpreted by a like phrase in chap. v. 19. and yet he himself cannot pretend that they are of a like meaning; nor does he understand them so. By the *whole world* in one place he understands all the inhabitants that ever were, or should be, in the world, excepting those from whom they are there distinguished: but, in the other, can only be meant the wicked of the world, who, *at that time*, existed upon the earth.

The most plausible argument advanced by P. is, in my opinion, from 2 Cor. v. 15. on which he observes, that the

* Rom. i. 8. † Isa. liv. 6. ‡ Matt. xiii. 33.

phrase *they who live*, is *distributive*, and must, therefore, include only a part of the *all* for whom Christ died. (p. 78.) Whether the following remarks are sufficient to invalidate the argument of P. from this passage, the reader is left to judge.

1. The context speaks of the GENTILES being interested in Christ, as well as the Jews. *Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.—If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* Ver. 16, 17, compared with Gal. vi. 15.

2. It does not appear to be the design of the Apostle, to affirm that Christ died for all that were dead, but that all were dead for whom Christ died. P. wonders, and, it seems, has much ado to keep up his good opinion of my integrity, for what I said in a note on this subject before. (p. 26.) That it is the main design of the Apostle to speak of the *condition* of those for whom Christ died, I conclude, partly from his having been describing the condition of sinners, as subject to the *terrors* of divine vengeance, (ver. 11.) and partly from the phraseology of ver. 14. The Apostle's words are, *If one died for all, then were* THEY *all dead;* which proves, both that the condition of those for whom Christ died was the subject of the Apostle's main discourse, and that the extent of the term *all*, in the latter part of this verse, is to be determined by the former, and not the former by the latter.

But "has the little word *all* lost its meaning?" No, certainly; nor does what is here advanced suppose that it has. The *main design* of a writer is not expressed in every word in a sentence; and yet every word may have its meaning. Though I suppose that the term here may refer to Jews and Gentiles, yet that does not necessarily imply, that it was the Apostle's *main design* here to speak of the extent of Christ's death.

3. Though our hypothesis supposes that all for whom Christ died shall finally live, yet it does not suppose that they all live *at present*. It is but a part of those for whom he died, viz. such as are called by his grace, who live not unto themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.

There are some other passages produced by P. particularly Heb. ii. 9. and 2 Pet. ii. 1. but I am ready to think he him-

self does not place much dependence upon them. He is not unacquainted with the scope of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor of the word *man* not being in the text. Nor need he be told, that the apostle Peter, in the context of the other passage, appears to be speaking nothing about the purchase of the Saviour's blood; that the name there given to the purchaser, is never applied to Christ: and that, if it is applied to him in this instance, it is common to speak of things, not as they actually are, but as they are professed to be: thus apostates are said to be *twice dead*, as if they had been spiritually alive; though, in fact, that was never the case, but barely the matter of their profession. See also Matt. xiii. 12. and Luke viii. 18.

§ 3. On the consistency of the limited extent of Christ's death, as stated above, with universal calls, invitations, &c.

Here we come to the second question, and to what is the only part of the subject to which I am properly called upon to reply. If a limitation of design in the death of Christ be inconsistent with exhortations and invitations to mankind in general, it must be because it is inconsistent for God to exhort and invite men to any thing with which he has not made gracious provision, by the death of his Son, to enable them to comply.

When I deny a gracious provision being necessary to render exhortations consistent, I would be understood to mean, 1. Something more than a provision of pardon in behalf of all those who shall believe in Christ: 2. More than the furnishing of men with motives and reasons for compliance; or ordering it so that these motives and reasons shall be urged upon them. If no more than this were meant by the term, I should allow that such a provision is necessary. But, by a gracious provision, I mean that, be it what it may, which removes a moral inability to comply with the gospel, and which renders such a compliance possible without the invincible agency of the Holy Spirit.

What has been said before may be here repeated, that the doctrine of a limitation of design in the death of Christ stands or falls with that of the divine *purposes*. If the latter can be maintained, and maintained to be consistent with the free

agency of man and the entire use of means, then it will not be very difficult to defend the former. I confess, the subject is profound, and that I enter upon it with fear and trembling. It is a subject on which I dare not indulge a spirit of speculation. Perhaps the best way of studying it is upon our knees! I hope it will be my endeavour to keep close to what God has revealed concerning it. There are, doubtless, many questions that might be started by a curious mind, which it would be difficult, and, perhaps, impossible to solve. Nor is this to be wondered at. The same difficulty attends us, in our present state, respecting almost all the works of God. No man could solve one half of the difficulties that might be started concerning God's goodness in creating the world, when he knew all that would follow. The same might be said of a thousand things in the scheme of divine providence. Suffice it for us, at present, that we know our littleness; that, when we come to see things as they are, we shall be fully convinced of all that has been told us, and shall unite in the universal acclamation, HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL!

That there is a consistency between the divine decrees and the free agency of men, I believe: but whether I can account for it, is another thing. Whether it can be accounted for at all, so as to enable us clearly to comprehend it, I cannot tell. Be that as it may, it does not distress me: I believe in both, because both appear, to me, to be plainly revealed. Of this I shall attempt to give evidence in what follows:

I. The *time of man's life* is appointed of God. *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?—His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.** And yet men are exhorted to use means to prolong their lives, and actually do use those means, as if there was no appointment in the case. God determines to send afflictions to individuals and families; and he may have determined that those afflictions shall terminate in death; nevertheless, it is God's revealed will, that they should use means for their recovery, as much as if there were

* Job vii. 1. xiv. 5. 14.

no determination in the affair. Children were exhorted to honour their parents, that their *days might be long* in the land which the Lord their God had given them. He that desired life, and loved *many days*, was exhorted to keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile.* If, by neglect or excess, any one come to what is called an untimely end, we are not to suppose either that God is disappointed, or the sinner exculpated.

II. Our *portion in this life* is represented as coming under the divine appointment.† It is a *cup*, a *lot*, an *heritage*. David spake of his portion as laid out for him by *line*. *The lines*, says he, *are fallen to me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage*. The times before appointed are *determined*, and the bounds of our habitation are *fixed*. It is a satisfaction to an humble mind, that his *times* and concerns *are in God's hand*, and that he has the *choosing of his inheritance*.‡ And yet, in all the concerns of life, we are exhorted to act with discretion, as much as if there were no divine providence.

The purposes of God extend to the *bitter* part of our portion, as well as to the sweet. Tribulations are things to which we are said to be *appointed*. Nor is it a mere *general* determination: of all the ills that befel an afflicted Job, not one came unordained. Cutting and complicated as they were, he calmly acknowledged this; and it was a matter of relief under his trouble: *He performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him*. Nevertheless, there are things which have a tendency to fill up this cup with either happiness or misery; and it is well known, that men are exhorted to pursue the one, and to avoid the other, the same as if there were no divine purpose whatever in the affair.

God appointed to give Pharaoh and Sihon up to their own hearts' lusts, which would certainly terminate in their destruction; and yet they ought each to have accepted of the messages of peace which God sent to them by the hand of

* Exod. xx. 12. Psa. xxxiv. 12.

† P. calls this in question; (p. 47.) and seems to admit that, if this could be proved, it would prove the consistency of the divine purposes concerning men's eternal state, with their obligations to use the means of salvation.

‡ Psa. xvi. 5, 6. Acts xvii. 26. Psa. xxxi. 15. xlvii. 4.

Moses. But here, I am told, I have obviated my own reasoning, by observing, elsewhere, that the 'predeterminations of God concerning those persons were founded on the foresight of their wicked conduct, of which their non-compliance with these messages of peace was no inconsiderable part.' (p. 47.) By this it should seem, then, that P. admits the reality of divine decrees, and that the final state of every one is thereby determined of God; only that it is upon the *foresight* of faith or unbelief. In that case, he seems to admit of a consistency between the purposes of God to punish some of the human race, and their being universally invited to believe, and be saved. And yet, if so, I see not the propriety of some of his objections against the doctrine of decrees. The thing against which he, in some places, reasons, is not so much their unconditionality, as the *certainty* of their issue. "All must be sensible," says he, "that the divine decrees *must stand*." (p. 50.) Be it so: must they not *stand*, as much upon his own hypothesis, as upon ours?

As to the *conditionality* of the divine decrees, it is allowed, that, in whatever instances God has determined to *punish* any of the sons of men, either in this world or in that to come, it is entirely upon the foresight of evil. It was so in all the punishments that befel Pharaoh and Sihon. But there was not only the exercise of punitive *justice* discovered in these instances, but, as well, a mixture of *sovereignty*. If the question be asked, Why did God *punish* these men? the answer is, On account of their sin. But if it be asked, Why did he punish them *rather than others, in themselves equally wicked?* the answer must be resolved into mere sovereignty. He that stopped a persecuting Saul in his vile career, could have turned the heart of a Pharaoh: but he is a debtor to none; he hath said, he *will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*. The apostle Paul considered the destruction of Pharaoh as not merely an instance of *justice*, but likewise of *sovereignty*; (Rom. ix. 10.) and concludes, from his example, *therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth:* which, I should suppose, can intend nothing less than leaving them to the hardness of their hearts. The 19th verse, which immediately follows, and contains the objections of that day, is so nearly akin to the objections of P. (p. 50.)

that I wonder he should not perceive it, and learn instruction by it.

III. Events which imply *the evil actions of men* come under the divine appointment. The visitations with which Job was afflicted were of *God's sending*. He himself knew this, and acknowledged it. And yet this did not hinder but that the Sabeans and Chaldeans acted as free agents in what they did, and that it was their duty to have done otherwise. Assyria was *God's rod* to Judah, and the staff in *their hands* was *his* indignation. And yet Assyria ought not so to have oppressed Judah. Pride, covetousness, and cruelty, were their motives; for all which they were called to account, and punished. Our Lord was delivered according to *the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*. His worst enemies did nothing to him but what *his hand and his counsel determined before to be done*. And yet this did not hinder but that with *wicked hands* they crucified and slew him; that the contrary of all this was their duty; and that the invitations and expostulations of our Lord with them were founded in propriety and sincerity. God did not determine to give Judas a heart to forbear betraying his master, when tempted by the lure of gain: on the contrary, he determined to give him up to his own heart's lust. The Son of man, in being betrayed, went as it was *determined:* and yet there was a wo due to, and denounced against, the horrid perpetrator, notwithstanding.*

Exclamations may abound; but facts are stubborn things. It is likely we may be told, 'If this be the case, we need not be uneasy about it; for it is as God would have it.' "If God has ordained it, why should we oppose it?" (p. 50.) But such a mode of objecting, as observed before, though of ancient, is not of very honourable extraction. If it be not identically the same which was made to the apostolic doctrine, it is certainly very nearly akin to it. I can discern no difference, except in words: *Thou wilt say then, Why dost thou yet* FIND FAULT? *For who hath resisted his will?* To which it was thought sufficient to reply, *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?*

After all, surely, there is a wide difference between an *effi-*

* Job i. 21. Isa. x. 5—14. Acts ii. 23. iv. 28, Luke xxii. 22.

cient and a *permissive* determination in respect to the existence of moral evil. To assign the former to the Divine Being, is to make him the author of sin: but not so, the latter. That God does permit evil, is a fact that cannot be disputed: and, if we admit the perfection of his moral character, it must be allowed to be consistent with his righteousness, whether we can fully conceive of it, or not. But, if it be consistent with the righteousness of God to permit evil, it cannot be otherwise to determine so to do, unless it be wrong to determine to do what is right.*

* Were it not for the candour which P. has discovered in other instances, and his solemn appeal to "the Searcher of hearts, that misrepresentation was not his aim," I should almost think he must take pleasure in representing my sentiments on the divine decrees in as shocking a light as he is able. What I should express in some such manner as this: 'God commands men in general to believe in Christ, though he knows they are so obstinately wicked that they cannot find in their heart so to do; and he has determined not to do all that he is able, to remove their obstinacy'—he will express for me thus: "God commands all to believe in Christ; and yet knows that they are not, or ever were, and determines they *never shall be able* to do it." (p. 49.) P. will allow, I suppose, that God has not determined to enable men, in the present state, perfectly to love him, with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength: and yet, if this were put into a positive form; if it were said, that God has determined that men, in the present state, *shall not love him* with all their hearts, but that *they shall* continue to break his law, it would wear a very different appearance.

That there is a conformity between God's revealed will and his decrees, I admit. (p. 49.) There is no contradiction in these things, in themselves considered, however they may appear to short-sighted mortals. That there is, however, a real distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, is not very difficult to prove. The will of God is represented, in scripture, 1. As that which CAN NEVER BE FRUSTRATED.—*Who hath resisted his will?—He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.—Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.—My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.—He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.—Of a truth, Lord, against thy holy child Jesus—both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done:*† 2. As that which MAY BE FRUSTRATED, or

† Rom. ix. 19. Job xxiii. 13. Ephes. i. 11. Isa. xlvi. 10. Dan. iv. 35. Acts iv. 27, 28.

IV. Our Lord declared, concerning those who should *blaspheme against the Holy Spirit*, that their sin should not be for-

disobeyed.—*That servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.—He that doeth the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.** The former belongeth unto *God*, being the rule of his own conduct, and to us is *secret*: the latter belongeth to *us*, and to our children for ever; being the rule of our conduct, *that we may do all the words of his law*; and this is fully *revealed*.†

It was God's will, in some sense or other, to permit Job, at the devil's request, to be deprived of his property by the Sabeans and Chaldeans; otherwise he would not have said to Satan, as he did—*All that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* And yet the conduct of these plunderers was certainly contrary to his revealed will, and to every rule of reason and equity. Nevertheless, God was not under obligation to do all he could have done to restrain them. It was not, therefore, at all inconsistent with his righteous disapprobation, that he willed to permit their abominations. It was the will of God, that Joseph should go down into Egypt. God is said to have sent him. The very thing which his brethren meant for evil, God meant for good. They fulfilled his secret will in what they did, though without design but they certainly violated his revealed will in the most flagrant manner.

If the commission of evil were the *direct end*, or *ultimate object*, of the secret will of God, that would certainly be in opposition to his revealed will; but this we do not suppose. If God wills not to hinder sin in any given instance, it is not from any love he has to sin, but for some other end. A master sees his servant idling away his time. He secretes himself, and suffers the idler to go on without disturbance. At length he appears, and accosts him in the language of rebuke. The servant, at a loss for a better answer, replies, 'How is this? I find you have been looking on for hours. It was your secret will, therefore, to let me alone, and suffer me to idle away your time; and yet I am reproved for disobeying your *will!* It seems you have two wills, and these opposite to each other. "How can I obey your commands, unless I knew you would have me to obey them?" Idleness, it seems, was agreeable to you, or you would not have stood by so long, and suffered me to go on in it undisturbed. *Why do you yet find fault? who hath resisted your will?*'

Would any one admit of such a reply? And yet, for aught I see, it is as good as that for which my opponent pleads. In this case, it is easy to see, that the master does not will to permit the servant's idle-

* Luke xii. 47. Mark iii. 35. † Deut. xxix. 29.

given, neither in this world nor in that to come. And there is no doubt, I think, but that some of the Jews were guilty of this sin, if not before, yet after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Their destruction, then, was inevitable. And yet the apostles were commissioned to preach the gospel to *every creature*, without distinction; and Christ's promise, *Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out*, continued of universal force. The primitive ministers made no scruple to call men to repent and believe, wherever they came. It is true, they seem to have been forbidden to pray for the forgiveness of the *sin itself*, (1 John v. 16.) for that would have been praying in direct contradiction to God's revealed will; but, as they knew not the hearts of men, nor who had, nor who had not, committed that sin, they were never forbidden, that I know of, to pray for men's souls, without distinction. They certainly did so pray, and addressed their auditors as if no such sin had existed in the world.* P. will allow, that the exhortations and invitations of the gospel were addressed to men indefinitely; and, if so, I should think they must have been addressed to some men, whom, at the same time, it was not the *intention* of Christ to save.

V. God has not determined to give men sufficient grace, in the present state, to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves; or, in other words, to keep his law perfectly. He has not made provision for it by the death of his Son. I suppose this may be taken for granted. If, then, a gracious provision is to be made the ground and rule of obligation, it must follow, that all commands and exhortations to perfect holiness in the present state, are utterly unreasonable. What meaning can there be, upon this supposition, in such scriptures as the following? *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would love me,*

ness *for idleness' sake*, but for another end. Nor does the servant do wrong, *as influenced by his master's will*, but by his own; and, therefore, his objections are altogether unreasonable and wicked. *These things hast thou done*, said God to such objectors, *and I kept silence: and thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes!*

* Acts xxvi. 29. Col. i. 23.

and fear me, and keep ALL *my commandments always! And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in* ALL *his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with* ALL *thy heart, and with* ALL *thy soul?—Be ye therefore* PERFECT, *even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.** If God's law continues to be an "invariable rule of human conduct, and infallible test of right and wrong," as P. says it does, then either there is a gracious provision made for perfection in the present state, or God requires and exhorts men to that for which no such provision is made.

VI. If I am not misinformed, P. allows of the *certain perseverance of all true believers.* He allows, I suppose, that God has determined their perseverance, and has made gracious and effectual provision for it. He will not say so of hypocrites. God has not determined that they shall *continue in his word*, hold out to the end, and finish their course with joy. Nevertheless, the scriptures address all professors alike, with cautions and warnings, promises and threatenings; as if there were no decree, nor any certainty in the matter, about one or the other. *Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling*, on the one hand are exhorted to *fear, lest a promise being left them of entering into rest, any of them should seem to come short of it*, and are warned, from the example of the unbelieving Israelites, to *labour to enter into rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.* The disciples of Christ were charged, upon pain of eternal damnation, *if their right hand or right eye caused them to offend, to cut it off, or pluck it out.* Whatever some may think of it, there would be no contradiction in saying to the best Christian in the world, 'If you deny Christ, he will deny you!'† Such as proved to be mere professors, on the other hand, were addressed by Christ in this manner; *If ye* CONTINUE *in my word, then shall ye be my disciples indeed;*‡ and, when any such turned back, and walked no more with him, though no such provision was made for their perseverance as is made for

* Deut. v. 29. x 12. Matt. v. 48.

† Heb. iii. 1. iv. 1. 11. Matt. xviii. 8, 9. x. 33. 2 Tim. ii. 12.

‡ John viii. 31.

true believers, yet their falling away was always considered as their *sin*. Judas, and Demas, and many others, fell under the divine displeasure for their apostacy.

I confess, these things may look like contradictions. They are, doubtless, profound subjects; and, perhaps, as some have expressed it, we shall never be fully able, in the present state, to explain the *link* that unites the appointments of God with the free actions of men: but such a link there is: the fact is revealed abundantly in scripture; and it does not distress me, if, in this matter, I have, all my life, to walk by faith, and not by sight.

From the above cases I conclude, that, however difficult it may appear to us, it is proper for God to exhort and invite men to duties with which he has not determined to give them a moral ability, or an heart, to comply; and for which compliance he has made no effectual provision by the death of his Son: and, if it is so in these cases, I farther conclude, it may be so in the case in hand.

Two remarks shall conclude this part of the subject:

1. Whether P. will allow of some of the foregoing grounds, as proper data, may be doubted. I could have been glad to have reasoned with him wholly upon his own principles; but, where that cannot be, it is right and just to make the word of God our ground. If he can overthrow the doctrine supposed to be maintained in these scriptures, it is allowed, that, in so doing, he will overthrow that which is built upon them; but not otherwise. In the last two arguments, however, I have the happiness to reason from principles which, I suppose, P. will allow.

2. Whether the foregoing reasoning will convince P. and those of his principles, or not, it may have some weight with considerate Calvinists. They must *either* give up the doctrine of predetermination, *or*, on this account, deny that men are obliged to act differently from what they do; that Pharaoh and Sihon, for instance, were obliged to comply with the messages of peace which were sent them; *or else*, if they will maintain both these, they must allow them to be consistent with each other; and, if divine decrees and free agency are consistent in some instances, it becomes them to give some solid reason why they should not be so in others.

§ 4. General reflections.

I am not insensible that the cause I have been pleading is such as may grate with the feelings of some of my readers. It may seem as if I were disputing with Philanthropy itself. To such readers I would recommend a few additional considerations:

I. The same objection would lie against me, if I had been opposing the notion of universal *salvation;* and yet it would not follow from thence, that I must be in the wrong. The feelings of *guilty* creatures, in matters wherein they themselves are so deeply interested, are but poor criterions of truth and errour.

II. There is no difference between us respecting the *number* or *character* of those that shall be finally saved. We agree, that whoever returns to God by Jesus Christ shall certainly be saved; that in every nation they that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted. What difference there is respects the *efficacy* of Christ's death, and the *causes* of salvation.

III. Even in point of *provision*, I see not wherein the scheme of P. has the advantage of that which he opposes. The provision made by the death of Christ is of two kinds: 1. A provision of pardon and acceptance for all believers; 2. A provision of grace to enable a sinner to believe. The first affords a *motive* for returning to God in Christ's name: the last excites to a *compliance* with that motive. Now, in which of these has the scheme of P. any advantage of that which he opposes? Not in the *first:* we suppose the provisions of Christ's death altogether sufficient for the fulfilment of his promises, be they as extensive as they may; that full and free pardon is provided for all that believe in him; and that, if all the inhabitants of the globe could be persuaded to return to God in Christ's name, they would undoubtedly be accepted of him. Does the scheme of P. propose any more? No: it pretends to no such thing as a provision for *unbelievers* being forgiven and accepted. Thus far, at least, therefore, we stand upon equal ground.

But has not P. the advantage in the *last* particular? does not his scheme boast of a universal provision of *grace*, suffi-

cient to enable every man to comply with the gospel? Yes, it does; but what it amounts to is difficult to say. Does it effectually produce, in mankind in general, any thing of a right spirit; any thing of a true desire to come to Christ for the salvation of their souls? No such thing, that I know of, is pretended. At most, it only amounts to this, that God is ready to help them out of their condition, *if they will but ask him;* and to give them every *assistance* in the good work, if they will but be in earnest, and set about it. Well: if this is the whole of which P. can boast, I see nothing superior, in this either, to the sentiment he opposes. We consider the least degree of a right spirit as plentifully encouraged in the word of God. If a person do but truly *desire* to come to Christ, or *desire the influence of the Holy Spirit to that end*, we doubt not but grace is provided for his assistance. God will surely *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.** Where, then, is the superiority of his system? It makes no effectual provision for begetting a right disposition in those who are so utterly destitute of it that they will not seek after it. It only encourages the well disposed; and, as to these, if their well-disposedness is real, there is no want of encouragement for them in the system he opposes.

4. Whether the scheme of P. has any advantage of that which he opposes, in one respect, or not, it certainly has a disadvantage in another. By it, the redemption and salvation of the whole human race is left to uncertainty; to such uncertainty, as to depend upon the fickle, capricious, and perverse will of man. It supposes no effectual provision made for Christ to *see of the travail of his soul*, in the salvation of sinners. P. has a very great objection to a sinner's coming to Christ with a *peradventure;* (p. 33.) but, it seems, he has no objection to his Lord and Saviour coming into the world, and laying down his life with no better security. Notwithstanding any provision made by his scheme, the Head of the church might have been without a single member, the King of Zion without a subject, and the Shepherd of Israel without any to constitute a flock. Satan might have triumphed for ever,

* Luke xi. 13.

and the many mansions in glory have remained eternally unoccupied by the children of men!*

5. Do we maintain that Christ, in his death, *designed* the salvation of those, and only those, who are finally saved? the same follows from our opponents' own principles. They will admit that Christ had a certain foreknowledge of all those who would, and who would not, believe in him: but did ever an intelligent being design that which he knew would never come to pass?

6. The scheme of P. though it professedly maintains that Christ died to atone for the sins of all mankind; yet, in reality, amounts to no such thing. The sin of mankind may be distinguished into two kinds: that which is committed simply against God as a lawgiver, antecedently to all considerations of the gift of Christ, and the grace of the gospel; and that which is committed more immediately against the gospel, despising the riches of God's goodness, and rejecting his way of salvation. Now, does P. maintain that Christ made atonement for both these? I believe not: on the contrary, his scheme supposes that he atoned for neither: not for the *first;* for he abundantly insists that there could be nothing of the nature of *blameworthiness* in this, and, consequently, nothing to require an atonement—not for the *last;* for, if so, atonement must be made for *impenitency* and *unbelief;* and, in

* P. observes, on Heb ii 9. that "it is undoubtedly a greater instance of the *grace* of God that Jesus Christ should die for *all*, than only for a *part* of mankind;" and this he thinks "an argument of no little force in favour of his sense of the passage." (p. 80.) It is true, if Christ had made *effectual* provision for the salvation of all, it would have been a greater display of grace than making such a provision for only a part;† but God has other perfections to display, as well as his grace; and the reader will perceive, by what has been said, that to make provision for all, in the sense in which P. contends for it, is so far from magnifying the grace of God, that it enervates, if not annihilates it. Where is the grace of taking mankind from a condition in which they would have been for ever *blameless*, and putting them into a situation in which, at best, their happiness was uncertain, their guilt certain, and their everlasting ruin very probable? R.

† Yet would *grace* have appeared *so evident*, if no one of our race had suffered the penalty of the law? Would every surmise have been precluded, that its infliction would have been too great a stretch of severity? Would it have been equally *clear*, that either the removal of guilt, or that the conquest of depravity, was solely of grace?

that case, surely these evils would not prove the ruin of the subject.

7. If the doctrine of the *total* depravity of human nature be admitted, (and it is so, professedly,) the scheme of P. would be utterly inadequate for the salvation of one soul. Supposing Christ to have died for *all the world*, in his sense of the phrase, yet, if all the world are so averse from Christ that they will not come unto him that they may have life, still they are never the nearer. It is to no purpose to say, There is grace provided for them, if they will but ask it: for the question returns, Will a mind, utterly averse from coming to Christ for life, sincerely desire grace to come to him? Nor is it of any use to suggest, that the gospel has a tendency to beget such a desire: for, be it so, it is supposed there is no *certainty* of its producing such an effect. Its success depends entirely upon the will of man in being pliable enough to be persuaded by it: but, if man is totally depraved, there can be no such pliability in him. Unless the gospel could exhibit a condition that should fall in with men's evil propensities, the aversion of their hearts would for ever forbid their compliance. Such a scheme, therefore, instead of being more extensive than ours, is of no real extent at all. Those good men who profess it, are not saved according to it; and this, in their near addresses to God, they as good as acknowledge. Whatever they say at other times, they dare not then ascribe to themselves the glory of their being among the number of believers, rather than others.

If the supposed universal extent of Christ's death had a universal efficacy, it would be worth the while of A LOVER OF ALL MANKIND to contend for it; but, if it proposes finally to save not *one soul more* than the scheme which it opposes; if it has no real advantage in point of *provision*, in one respect, and a manifest disadvantage in another; if it enervates the doctrine of the *atonement;* confessedly leaves the salvation of those who are saved to an *uncertainty*, and, by implication, renders it *impossible;* then to what does it all amount? If P. holds that Christ died for all, it is neither so as to *redeem* all, nor so much as to procure them the *offer* of redemption; since millions and millions for whom Christ suffered, upon

his principles, have died, notwithstanding, in heathen darkness.*

* It seems, to me, a poor and inconsistent answer, which is commonly given by our opponents upon this subject. They affirm, that Christ died with a view to the salvation of the whole human race, *how wicked soever they have been;* and yet they suppose that God, *for the sin of some* nations, withholds the gospel from them. The giving of Christ to die for us, is surely a *greater* thing than sending the gospel to us. One should think, therefore, if, notwithstanding men's wickedness, God could find it in his heart to do the greater, he would not, by the self-same wickedness, be provoked to withhold the lesser. Besides, on some occasions, our opponents speak of the gospel as a system *adapted to the condition of sinners*, yea, to the *chief of sinners;* and, if so, why not to those nations who are the chief of sinners? P. observes very justly, however inconsistent with some other things which he elsewhere advances, that the gospel takes men's fallen, polluted, and depraved state for granted, and is properly adapted to remove it: (p. 23.) How is it, then, that that which renders them proper objects of gospel invitations, should be the very reason assigned for those invitations being withheld?

Whether there may not be a mixture of punitive justice in God's withholding the gospel from some nations, I shall not dispute. At the same time, supposing that to be the case, it may be safely affirmed, that the same punishment might, with equal justice, have been inflicted upon other nations who have all along enjoyed it; and that it is not owing to their having been better than others, that they have been so favoured. One might ask of Jerusalem and Corinth, Chorazin and Bethsaida, Were they less infamous than other cities? rather, were they not the reverse? And may we not all, who enjoy the gospel, when we compare ourselves with even Heathen nations, adopt the language of the Apostle, *Are we better than they? no, in nowise!*

If it be said, The providence of God is a great deep; and we cannot, from thence, draw any conclusions respecting his designs; I answer, by granting that, indeed, the providence of God is a great deep; and, if our opponents will never acknowledge a secret and revealed will in God in any thing else, one should think they must here; seeing Christ's revealed will is, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature*, without distinction; and yet, by their own confession, it is his secret purpose to withhold it from some, even whole nations. As to drawing conclusions from hence concerning God's designs, I should think it no arrogance so to do, provided we do not pretend to judge from thence concerning events which are future. We are warranted to consider God's providences as so many expressions of what have been his designs. *He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* It is true, we cannot thence learn his *revealed will*, nor what is the path of duty; nor are we to go by that in our

P. thinks *success* to be a proof of the goodness of a doctrine. (pp. 4, 5.) I think it is a matter deserving considerable attention; but cannot consider it as decisive: especially as certain questions might be asked concerning it, which it would be difficult to answer; as, What is real success? and, What was it, in the ministry of a preacher, which was blessed to that end? If, however, that is to be a criterion of principles, then we might expect, if the scheme of P. be true, that, in proportion as the doctrines maintained by Calvin and the first Reformers began to be laid aside, and those of Arminius introduced in their stead, a proportionable blessing should have attended them. Surely he cannot complain, that the universal extent of Christ's death, with various other kindred sentiments, are not generally embraced. The number of advocates for these sentiments has certainly been long increasing. If, therefore, these are gospel truths, the Christian world, in general, may be congratulated for having imbibed them; and, one should think, a glorious harvest might be expected as the effect. But, I suppose, were we to be set down by fact, as it has occurred in our own country, both in and out of the Establishment, it would be far from confirming this representation. I question if P. himself will affirm, that a greater blessing has attended the ministry in the Church of England since little else but these sentiments have sounded from its pulpits, than used to attend, and still attends, the labours of those whom he is pleased to style "INCONSISTENT CALVINISTS." As to Pro-

preaching, but by Christ's commission. It were well, if Christian ministers could be excited and encouraged to enter into the most Heathen and dark corners of the earth to execute their commission. They ought not to stand to inquire what are God's designs concerning them: their work is to go and *do as they are commanded.* But, though the providence of God is not that from whence we are to learn his revealed will, yet, when we see events turn up, we may conclude, that, for some ends, known to himself, these were among the *all things* which he *worketh after the counsel of his own will.*

Far be it from me to pretend to fathom the great deep of divine providence! But when I read in my Bible, that *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;* and that the apostle Paul was encouraged to continue his ministry in one of the most infamous cities in the world, by this testimony, *I have much people in this city;* I cannot but think such passages throw a light upon those darker dispensations.

testant Dissenters; if such of them as maintain the universal extent of Christ's death, have been, more than others, blessed to the conversion of sinners, and if their congregations, upon the whole, have more of the life and power of godliness among them than others, it is happy for them; but, if so it is, I acknowledge it is news to me. I never knew nor heard of any thing sufficient to warrant a supposition of that nature.

P. thinks my "views of things, after all, open a wide door to licentiousness; (p. 60.) but that, if we were to admit what he accounts opposite sentiments, it would be the most likely way to put a stop to *real* and *practical* Antinomianism." (p. 51.) I reply, as before, Surely he cannot complain that the universal extent of Christ's death, with other kindred sentiments, are not generally embraced; and will he pretend to say, that real and practical Antinomianism has been thereby rooted up? Since the body of the Church of England have embraced those principles, have they been better friends to the law of God than before? and has a holy life and conversation been gradually increasing among them, as the old Calvinistic doctrines have fallen into disrepute? Farther: do the body of those Protestant Dissenters who reject what are commonly called the Calvinistic doctrines, discover more regard to holiness of life than the body of those who embrace them? God forbid that we should any of us boast; by the grace of God we are what we are: and we have all defects enow to cover our faces with shame and confusion! But, without invidious reflections, without impeaching the character of any man, or body of men, I am inclined to think, that, if such a comparison were made, it would fail of proving the point which P. proposes. It is a well-known fact, that many who deny the law of God to be a rule of life, do, at the same time, maintain the universal extent of Christ's death.

P. seems to have written with the benevolent design of bringing me and others over to his sentiments; and I thank him for his friendly intention. Could I see evidence on his side, I hope I should embrace his invitation. But it is a presumptive argument, with me, that his views of things must be, some how or other, very distant from the truth, or they could not abound with such manifest inconsistencies. A scheme that requires us to maintain that we are saved wholly by *grace*, and yet, so far

as we *differ from others*, it is not the Spirit of God, but we ourselves that cause the difference; that to be born *in* sin is the same thing as to be born *blameless*, or, in other words, *free from it;* that, if vice is so predominant that there is no virtue to oppose it, or not virtue sufficient to overcome it, then it ceases to be vice any longer; that God is *obliged* to give us *grace*, (or, in other words, we may *demand* that of him to which we can lay no *claim,)* or else insist upon it, that we are not accountable beings; that God so loved mankind as to give his Son to die—not, however, to save them from *sin*—but to deliver them from a blameless condition, put them into a capacity of being blameworthy, and thus expose them to the danger of everlasting destruction;—a scheme, I say, that requires us to maintain such inconsistencies as these, must be, some how or other, fundamentally wrong. What others may think, I cannot tell; but, for my part, I must withhold my assent, till more substantial and consistent evidence is produced.

If I have not taken notice of every particular argument and text of scripture advanced by P. I hope I shall be allowed to have selected such as were of the greatest force, and by which the main pillars of his system are supported.

If I have, in any instance, mistaken his meaning, I hope he will excuse it. I can say, I have taken pains to understand him. But, whether I have always ascertained his meaning, or not; and whether the consequences which I have pointed out as arising from his sentiments, be just, or not; I can unite with him in appealing to "the Searcher of hearts, that misrepresentation has not, in any one instance, been my aim."

As I did not engage in controversy from any love I had to the thing itself, so I have no mind to continue in it any farther than some good end may be answered by it. Whether what I have written already tends to that end, it becomes not me to decide; but, supposing it does, there is a point in all controversies, beyond which they are unprofitable and tedious. When we have stated the body of an argument, and attempted an answer to the main objections, the most profitable part of the work is done. Whatever is attempted afterwards must either consist of little personalities, with which the reader has no concern; or, at best, it will respect the minutiæ of things, in which case it seldom has a tendency to edification. To this

I may add, though I see no reason, at present, to repent of having engaged in this controversy, and, were it to do again, should probably do the same: yet it never was my intention to engage in a controversy for life. Every person employed in the ministry of the gospel, has other things, of equal importance, upon his hands. If, therefore, any or all of my opponents should think proper to write again, the press is open; but, unless something very extraordinary should appear, they must not conclude that I esteem their performances unanswerable, though I should read them without making any farther reply. The last word is no object with me: the main arguments, on all sides of the controversy, I suppose are before the public; let them judge of their weight and importance.

A reflection or two shall conclude the whole. However firmly any of the parties engaged in this controversy may be persuaded of the goodness of his cause, let us all beware of *idolizing* a sentiment. This is a temptation to which controversialists are particularly liable. There is a lovely *proportion* in divine truth: if one part of it be insisted on to the neglect of another, the beauty of the whole is defaced; and the ill effects of such a partial distribution will be visible in the spirit, if not in the conduct, of those who admire it.

Farther: Whatever difficulties there may be in finding out truth, and whatever mistakes may attend any of us in this controversy, (as it is very probable we are each mistaken in some things,) yet let us ever remember, *truth itself is of the greatest importance.* It is very common for persons, when they find a subject much disputed, especially if it is by those whom they account good men, immediately to conclude, that it must be a subject of but little consequence, a mere matter of speculation. Upon such persons religious controversies have a very ill effect: for, finding a difficulty attending the coming at the truth, and, at the same time, a disposition to neglect it, and to pursue other things; they readily avail themselves of what appears, to them, a plausible excuse, lay aside the inquiry, and sit down and indulge a spirit of scepticism. True it is, that such variety of opinions ought to make us very diffident of ourselves, and teach us to exercise a Christian forbearance towards those who differ from us. It should teach

us to know and feel what an inspired Apostle acknowledged, that *here we see but in part*, and are, at best, but in a state of *childhood*. But, if all disputed subjects are to be reckoned matters of mere speculation, we shall have nothing of any real use left in religion. Nor shall we stop here: if the same method of judging of the importance of things were adopted respecting the various opinions in useful science, the world would presently be in a state of stagnation. What a variety of opinions are there, for instance, concerning the best modes of *agriculture;* but, if any person were to imagine from hence, that agriculture itself must be a matter of no importance, and that all those articles therein, which have come under dispute, must be matters of mere idle speculation, what a great mistake would he be under! And if a great number were to imbibe the same spirit, and, seeing there were so many opinions, resolve to pay no attention to any of them, and to live in the total neglect of all business, how absurd must such a conduct appear, and how pernicious must be the consequences! But a neglect of all divine truth, on account of the variety of opinions concerning it, is fully as absurd, and infinitely more pernicious. As much as the concerns of our bodies are exceeded by those of our souls, or time by eternity; so much is the most useful human science exceeded in importance by those truths which are sacred and divine.

Finally: Let us all take heed that our attachments to divine truth itself be on account of its being *divine*. We are ever in extremes: and whilst one, in a time of controversy, throws off all regard to religious sentiment in the gross, reckoning the whole a matter of speculation; another becomes excessively affected to his own opinions, whether right or wrong, without bringing them to the great criterion, the word of God. Happy will it be for us all, if truth be the sole object of our inquiries, and if our attachment to divine truth itself be, not on account of its being what we have once engaged to defend, but what God hath revealed. This only will endure reflection in a dying hour, and be approved when the time of disputing shall have an end with men.

THE

REALITY AND EFFICACY OF DIVINE GRACE,

WITH THE

CERTAIN SUCCESS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS IN BEHALF OF ALL WHO ARE FINALLY SAVED:

CONSIDERED IN A SERIES OF LETTERS:

CONTAINING

REMARKS UPON THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE REV. DAN TAYLOR ON MR. FULLER'S REPLY TO PHILANTHROPOS.

BY AGNOSTOS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE readers of the controversy between Mr. Fuller and Mr. Dan Taylor will recollect, that, at the close of this controversy, a pamphlet appeared, consisting of Letters addressed to Mr. Fuller, and bearing the signature of AGNOSTOS. As these Letters now make their appearance among Mr. Fuller's writings, it will be proper to state, for the information of readers in general, that, with the exception of one or two pages, they were written by Mr. Fuller himself. His reason for concealing his name, in this publication, may be stated in a few words. The controversy had already been extended to a considerable length. Mr. Fuller, while unwilling that it should terminate without his making some additional remarks, conceived that these remarks, if appearing to proceed from the pen of a third person, would be less likely to prolong the discussion, and would be read with greater interest by the public, who, he conceived, already began to be wearied by its prolixity. As this reason for concealment no longer exists, the Editor has inserted these observations in the body of Mr. Fuller's Works, and has cast them into the shape of Letters *written* by Mr. Fuller, instead of Letters *addressed* to him, by changing the second person, wherever it was necessary, into the first. This, with a few other trifling changes and omissions, unavoidably arising from the form which the Letters now assume, constitutes the whole of the alterations which have been made in them. The Letters were deemed too important to be left out of this edition of Mr. Fuller's Works, but could not, with propriety, appear in their original form.

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☞ The references to Mr. Taylor's two publications are distinguished by the numerals IX. and XIII. Thus by (IX. 50.) is meant the 50th page of Mr. Taylor's *Nine Letters;* and by (XIII. 135.) is meant the 135th page of his *Thirteen Letters.* The references to the latter publication are to the second edition.

THE REALITY AND EFFICACY OF DIVINE GRACE,

&c.

LETTER I.

My dear Friend,

I HAVE lately been engaged in a religious controversy, in which my original design was directed against what I considered as an abuse of the doctrines of discriminating grace; but, in executing this design, I have sustained an attack from an opposite quarter. At this I am not much surprised; as the principles which I maintain are equally repugnant to Arminianism as to Pseudo-Calvinism.

Having carefully attended to this controversy in all its parts, I must confess myself still of opinion, that, in the main I have engaged on the side of truth; and that the arguments which I have advanced have not yet been solidly answered.

Mr. Dan Taylor, who, under the signature of Philanthropos, animadverted on my first publication, and to whose animadversions I have written a Reply, has taken up his pen again. In addition to his first *Nine Letters*, he has written *Thirteen* more upon the subject; yet it appears, to me, that he has not answered my main arguments, but, in fact, has, in various cases, sufficiently refuted himself.

Mr. T. appears to have been hurt by what I said concerning his want of *reverence*, and the resemblance of his objection to that made against the apostle, in Romans ix. He submits it "to the judgment of those who are accustomed to think de-

liberately, how far any part of this was just; whether I did not arrogate a great deal more to myself than I ought to have done; whether I ought not, prior to these charges, to have proved myself possessed of apostolical authority, powers, and infallibility, and to have proved, by apostolical methods, that the particular sentiments against which he there objected, came from heaven." (XIII 135.) Now, I hope not to be deemed arrogant, if I profess to have thought at least with some degree of "deliberation" upon the subject; and I declare I cannot see the propriety of any thing Mr. T. here alleges. I did not compare *him* to those who blasphemously opposed the apostle's doctrine: the comparison respected barely his mode of reasoning, and not his person or character. Nor does what I have alleged require that I should prove myself possessed of apostolical infallibility. The whole of what is said amounts to no more than this, that the resemblance of his objection (IX. 50) to that made by the adversaries of the apostle, in Romans ix. 19. ought to make him suspect, whether the sentiments he maintains are not too near akin to theirs; and whether the sentiments he opposes are not of the same stamp with those of the Apostle: otherwise, how is it that they should be liable to have the same objections made against them?*

As to what I said concerning *reverence*, I observe that, in one place, (XIII. 6.) he *thanks* me for it, and hopes he "shall profit by it;" but, presently after, talks of *pardoning* me, and, before he has done, charges it to a want of *candour* or *justice;* (XIII.135.) and, all through his piece, frequently glances at it in a manner that shows him to have been quite displeased. Now, what can any one make of all this, put together? There was either occasion for what I wrote, or there was not. If there *was*, why talk of *pardoning* me? and why charge me with a want of *candour* or *justice?* If there was *not*, and Mr. T. thinks so, why does he *thank* me for it? How are we to reconcile these things? Does the one express the state of

* It is a good mode of reasoning, to argue from the similarity of the opposition made to any doctrine in the days of the apostles, with that which is made to a doctrine in the present day. Mr. Caleb Evans has thus, I think, solidly and excellently defended the doctrine of the atonement, in four Sermons on 1 Cor. ii. 23, 24.

mind Mr. T. would be thought to possess, and the other what he actually feels? or did he set out in a mild and amiable spirit, but, before he had done, lose his temper, and not know how to conceal it?

I would not wish, however, to spend much time in pointing out the defects of my opponent's temper. We all, particularly when engaged in controversy, need to *take good heed to our spirits*. And, perhaps, few can be long employed in so difficult an affair, without affording their antagonist an opportunity to say, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*. If this does not provoke retaliation, it may be of use to the person reproved, but it is of very little consequence to the public, especially after the first dispute is over. Let us waive this subject in future, and pass on to such things as are of more general importance.

I do not intend minutely to particularize every article of debate between myself and Mr. T., though, if I were, I am persuaded the far greater part of his observations might be proved to be destitute of propriety. I would only notice, in this Letter, one or two, which seem to fall under the class of *general remarks*, and then proceed to the consideration of the main subjects wherein we differ.

It is a matter of "wonder" to Mr. T. that I should be "unable to pronounce to what *degree*, or *extent*, a poor sinner must believe the truth of the gospel, in order to be happy; or to what *degree* of holiness a man must arrive, in order to see the Lord." (XIII. 7.) It should seem, then, to be no difficulty with *him*. Well: how does he solve it? why, by acknowledging, THAT IT IS NOT ANY DEGREE OF FAITH IN THE GOSPEL WHICH IS NECESSARY TO SALVATION; NOR ANY DEGREE OF HOLINESS, ANY MORE THAN FAITH; but THE REALITY of it, without which no man shall *see the Lord!!!* Mr. T. has a mind, surely, to make other people wonder, as well as himself!

Again: I was thronged with opponents. I did not, therefore, think it necessary to make a formal reply to every single argument; such a plan must have swelled the publication to an enormous size: I, therefore, only selected the main subjects in debate, and attempted a fair discussion of them, with the arguments adduced in support of them. Mr. T. seems to

complain of this my *systematical* way of treating the subject, as he calls it; (XIII. 8.) and sometimes singles out a particular argument of his, of which I have taken no notice, and insinuates as if it was because I felt it unanswerable. (XIII. 14.) But is it not wonderful that he should complain of me, and, at the same time, be guilty of the same thing himself? He has omitted making any reply to nearly as much in mine, as I have in his; and to things also of considerable force. My reasonings in pp. 32—34.* he has entirely passed over; as also my argument on the non-publication of the gospel, pp. 105—107. Note.† If Mr. T. looked upon *me* as obliged to answer every particular argument, notwithstanding the number of my opponents, what can be said for his *own* omissions, who had only *one* to oppose?

In my next, I will begin to attend to the main subjects on which we differ; viz. *the work of the Spirit—the excusableness of sinners on the non-provision of grace—the extent of the moral law—and the design of Christ's death.*

At present, I remain,

Yours, &c.

AGNOSTOS.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir,

I WOULD now proceed to the *first* of the four main subjects in debate between myself and Mr. Taylor—THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT. There has been pretty much said between us on the *order* of regeneration and faith, and the instrumentality of the word in regeneration. I did not wish to contest that matter, be it which way it might, provided the *agency* of the Holy Spirit was but acknowledged. Mr. T. however, chooses

* Pages 266—268 of this volume.

† Pages 328, 329 of this volume.

to dwell upon this subject; yet it seems rather extraordinary, that, in all his replies, he has taken no notice of what I advanced in pp. 7, 8.*

Mr. T. seems to think that *regeneration* includes the *whole change* that is brought about upon a person in order to his being denominated a true Christian; and not merely the *first beginning* of it (XIII. 11.) I think, in this I may agree with him, so far, at least, as to allow that the term is to be understood in such a large sense in some places in the New Testament; and, if that is the case, I feel no difficulty in concurring with him, that regeneration is *by the word of truth*. But this, perhaps, may not satisfy my opponent, after all. He denies that men are enlightened previously to their believing the gospel; (XIII. 12.) and yet one would think that a person must understand any thing before he believes it; and, if so, his mind cannot be said to be illuminated by faith. But still it is *by the word:* here Mr. T. will allow of no *difficulties;* or, if I will talk of difficulties, he will impute it to my forsaking my Bible. (XIII. 12.) Well: have but patience with him, in twelve pages farther, when he begins to feel difficulties himself, we shall find him atoning for this severity by commending me for the same thing upon which he here puts so heavy a construction.† (XIII. 24.)

I attempted to prove that Mr. T.'s sentiments leave out the agency of the Holy Spirit in the act itself of believing; or

* Pages 245, 246, of this volume.

† Whatever Mr T. thinks, some have thought that considerable difficulties would attend our supposing *all* divine illumination to be by the word; nor are these objections drawn from "metaphysical speculations," but from the word itself. Thus they reason: 1. It is a fact that evil propensity in the heart has a strange tendency to blind the mind. Ephes. iv. 18. 2. It is promised by the Holy Spirit, *I will give them a heart to know me*, Jer. xxiv. 7. But a heart to know God must be prior to that knowledge, and cannot, therefore, be produced by means of it. 3. *The natural man* is said *not to receive the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned.* But, if a spiritual discernment is necessary in order to knowing spiritual things, that discernment cannot be produced *by* those spiritual things, unless the consequent can produce its antecedent. I wished not, however, to dispute about the order of things, but, rather, to attend to what is of far greater importance.

that, "if there is any divine agency in the matter, it is only a sort of grace given to men in common; which, therefore, can be no reason why any man, rather than another, believes in Christ." Thus I stated it in p. 9.* Mr. T. in reply, complains that I have wronged him in representing him as leaving out the agency of the Holy Spirit in the act itself of believing; and informs us that he distinguishes between "the *operations* and *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit." (XIII. 27.) But wherein have I wronged him? I have allowed him to maintain a sort of divine agency, or grace, which is given to men in common: but this, certainly, can be no cause why one man, rather than another, believes in Christ. And with this Mr. T.'s own account, (XIII. 13.) so far as I can understand him, perfectly agrees.

I maintain that it is owing to divine agency, and to that *alone*, that one sinner, rather than another, believes in Christ. I must confess that Mr. T. writes, on this subject, in a confused and contradictory manner: (XIII. 23.) and well he may; his system will not admit it, and yet his heart knows not how to deny it. First, he goes about to qualify my question: "If by the term *alone*," says he, "be meant, that no sinner would believe in Christ, without divine operations, I freely grant it." True, he might; but that *is not all* I plead for, nor what my words evidently intend: and this he knows very well, and ought not, therefore, to have made such an evasion. What *he* allows may be held, without admitting that it is owing to the Holy Spirit, that one sinner, rather than another, believes in Christ. He adds, "But, if he mean that men are *passive* in this matter, when the Spirit, by the word operates on the mind: that I do not believe." This is another evasion. My words do not imply that men are passive in believing in Christ. I conceive that men become active, when the Spirit operates upon their minds, though they were passive *in* that operation. The very idea of operation upon a subject implies that subject to be passive in such operation. The immediate effect may be activity. But to suppose that the subject on whom the operation is performed, is not passive in being the subject of the operation, is to suppose that

* Page 248 of this volume.

he himself, and not the Spirit, puts forth that operation by which grace is produced. That the mind, in receiving Christ, is active, I allow; but this is no way inconsistent with the Holy Spirit being the proper, sole, efficient cause of such activity. There was no dispute whether "man was the subject of faith and unbelief," as his answer seems to represent; (XIII. 24.) but whether the Blessed Spirit was the *sole*, *efficient*, and proper *cause* of our believing.

After all that Mr. T. says, in order to get over this difficulty, (XIII. 24, 25.) what does it amount to? "If the Spirit, by the word, bring me to believe, and not another, whatever is the cause, or the obstruction; that is, in a general sense done for me, which is not done for another, and demands everlasting grateful acknowledgments." Of this general sense, or meaning, I can make no meaning at all. It certainly does not ascribe the difference between one sinner and another to God, but to the creature; and this is the very spirit and tendency of his whole system, which ought to sink it in the esteem of every humble, considerate mind. But the Holy Spirit "does that for those who do not believe, which is sufficient for the purpose, and which would bring them to faith and happiness, if they were not to abuse it." (XIII. 25.) So far as relates to objective evidence being presented, (and which is sufficient to render men who are in possession of their natural faculties inexcusable,) we are, in this matter, agreed. But, in reference to the work of the Spirit itself, if its success does indeed depend upon the pliability of the subject, then, so far, salvation is not of grace; for the very turning point of the whole affair is owing to the creature, and to his own good improvement of what was given to him in common with others. To speak of that being done which is sufficient, *if not abused*, is saying nothing at all. For how, if the human heart should be so depraved, as that it will be sure to abuse every word and work of God, short of that which is omnipotent? That men resist the Holy Spirit, and abuse the grace of the gospel, is true: but the question is, *not* whether this their abuse is their wickedness, *but*, how came Mr. T.

or any other man, to be so pliable and well-disposed, as *not* to resist it?*

"I cannot prove," says Mr. T. "that the Holy Spirit does not do as much, or more, in this (general) sense, for some who do not repent and believe, as for some who do. Truth itself informs us, that what was done, without effect, for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, would have been effectual for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom." (XIII. 25.) Truth, indeed, does inform us of *something* being done for those cities; but it makes no mention of the work of the Spirit in or upon them, but merely of the mighty works (or miracles) which were wrought among them. These *ought* to have led them to repentance, though they did not. 'But did not Christ speak, as if Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented, had they enjoyed the same means?' Yes, he did; and so did God speak concerning his people Israel: *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he became their Saviour.* Again: *I looked that my vineyard should have brought forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.* Again: *Thou art not sent unto a people of a strange speech, and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.—Last of all, he sent his son, saying, They will reverence my son.*† But do these speeches prove that God really thought things would be so? Rather, are they not evidently to be understood of God's speaking, after the manner of men, of what might have been expected, according to human appearance?

* In page 23 of his *Thirteen Letters*, Mr. T. speaking of believing in Christ, says, he does "not apprehend that any man has any will or power, or any concern about the matter, till the Holy Spirit work, awaken, and produce these in the mind." But the Holy Spirit, he thinks, operates sufficiently in all men; *he does that* for *those* who do *not* believe, which is sufficient for the purpose: yea, he supposes he does as much, or more, in this sense, for some who do not repent and believe, as for some who do. (p. 25.) Mr. T. must allow, that no man can ever do what he has neither *will* nor *power* to perform. The mind must be either active or passive in the production of the will and power of which he speaks. If *passive*, his whole system is overthrown: if *active*, the supposed prior activity is while they have neither *will* nor *power* to act; which is absurd.

† Isa. lxiii. 8. v. 2. Ezek. iii. 5, 6. Matt. xxi. 37.

"I do not remember," says Mr. T. "that the scripture ever ascribes the final misery of sinners to the want of divine influences," &c. (XIII. 27.) True: nor do my sentiments suppose *that* to be the cause of final misery. His reasoning on this subject (XIII. 32.) is extravagant. It is sin, and sin alone, which is the cause of any man's ruin. He might as well say, that a man is brought *into* misery, *because* he is not brought *out* of it. The destruction of fallen angels is no more ascribed to the want of divine mercy, than that of fallen men.

Mr. T. thinks the cases of wicked men being restrained from wickedness, godly men growing in grace, &c. may illustrate the subject in question; (XIII. 30.) I think so too. I also think with him concerning men's obligations to these things; that much more might be done than what is done; but that, if they *are* done, it is to be ascribed to God, because it is he who works all our works in us; I think the same of faith in Christ. These are not things wherein we differ; but the question is, though, in words, Mr. T. ascribes these things, as well as faith, to God, whether his system does not ascribe them to the creature. This it certainly does; and he as good as acknowledges it, (XIII. 52.) where (in contradiction to what he here asserts) he pleads for men's being able, *independent of the grace of the gospel*, to abstain from gross abominations.

Mr. T. has not thought proper to controvert my arguments in pp. 9—19;* for a special and *effectual* influence of the Holy Spirit; but thinks that these may be admitted, without destroying his sentiments; only observing, that, if he were to follow me through those reasonings, he "should question the propriety of the turn I give to a few passages of scripture." (XIII. 26.) It will be time enough to reply, when we know what he has to object against my sense of those passages. But how is it that Mr. T. would have it thought that his sentiments are unaffected by those arguments? Had he but admitted the sentiment established by those arguments, it would have saved him much trouble, which he has taken, in trying to account for God's doing the same for one man as for another, and yet *making men to differ*. If God works *effectually*

* Pages 248—256 of this volume.

on some, that is more than he will pretend that he does upon all; and this will perfectly account for a difference between one sinner and another. And if this way of God's making men to differ be admitted in *some* instances, it must in *all*, seeing one believer, as much as another, is taught to ascribe the difference between him and others to God alone*. But Mr. T. does not believe an *effectual* influence; such an influence, admitted, would be destructive of his whole system. He supposes an effectual influence would be destructive of free agency and moral government. (XIII. 129.) That it would be destructive of either, according to the scriptural account of them, has not yet been proved; but that it would destroy his notions concerning them, is admitted; and this proves that an effectual influence is inconsistent with his sentiments.

If Mr. T.'s reasonings (XIII. 33.) prove any thing, they prove that God will furnish every man in the world with the means of salvation; but so far is this from corresponding with *fact*, that the gospel was never preached to the far greater part of mankind who have hitherto lived; and some of whom, Mr. T. supposes, would have really believed and been saved, had they but heard it. (XIII. 25.)

I shall close my remarks on this part of the debate with a few observations on the resistibleness or irresistibleness of the Holy Spirit. I apprehend he is both resistible and irresistible, in different respects. The following observations are submitted to the reader's attention: 1. God has so constituted the human mind, that words, whether spoken or written, shall have an effect upon it. 2. The Holy Spirit speaks to men in his word: he has written to them the great things of his law. 3. It would be strange, if God's word should not have some effect upon people's minds, as well as the words and writings of men. It would be very strange, if neither the warnings nor expostulations, the threatenings nor the promises of God, should have any effect upon the mind; whereas the same things, among men, are constantly known to inspire them with various feelings. 4. The influence of the word upon the mind, seeing that word is indited by the Holy Spirit,

* Rom. iii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 10. John xiv. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

may be called, in an indirect and figurative sense, the influence of the Holy Spirit. It was with this kind of influence that he *strove* with the antediluvians in the ministry of Noah, &c. (Gen. vi. 3.) and was resisted by the Israelites. That is, they resisted the *messages* which the Holy Spirit sent unto them by Moses and the prophets; and their successors did the same by the messages sent them by Christ and his apostles. (Acts vii. 51.) And thus the admonitions of parents, the events of providence, and the alarms of conscience, as well as the word preached and written, may each, in an indirect sense, be said to be the strivings of the Holy Spirit. This influence *ought* to suffice to bring us to repent of sin, and believe in Christ, and were it not for the resistance that is made to it, *would* have such an effect; but, through the perverseness of the human heart, it *never has*. It is a great sin to resist and overcome it; but it is such a sin as every man, while unregenerate, is guilty of. 5. Besides this, it has been allowed, by many of the most steady and able defenders of the doctrine of efficacious grace, that the Holy Spirit may, by his immediate, but more *common* influence, impress the minds of unregenerate men, and assist reason and natural conscience to perform their office more fully; so that, notwithstanding the bias of the will is still bent in favour of sin, yet they are made sensible of many truths contained in the word of God, and feel somewhat of that alarming apprehension of their danger, and of the power of the divine anger, &c. which all impenitent sinners will experience in a much superior degree at the day of judgment. But sinners, under these common awakenings only, continue destitute of that realizing sense of the *excellence* of divine things, which is peculiar to those who are effectually renewed in the spirit of their minds; and to which the power of sin has entirely blinded the minds of the unregenerate. 6. From the depravity or perverseness of the human heart arises the necessity of a *special* and *effectual* influence of the Holy Spirit. The influence before mentioned may *move* the soul; but it will not bring it home to God. When souls are effectually turned to God, it is spoken of as the result of a special exertion of almighty power. *God who* COMMANDED *the light to shine out*

of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—Thy people SHALL *be willing in the day of thy* POWER.—*I* WILL *put my law in their inward part, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—Who hath believed our report; and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?**

These observations may account for several things which Mr. T. has remarked, (particularly in XIII. 28, 29.) without supposing that the *special* operations of the Holy Spirit are ever finally overcome.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir,

THE second general subject in debate respects the nature of that *inability* of which mankind are the subjects, in respect of compliance with the will of God; or, more particularly, original sin, human depravity, and the *grace of God*. On these subjects Mr. T. has written his Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Letters. He sets out with an observation on *free agency*, which discovers, in my opinion, the ground of a great many other of his mistakes. He supposes that a *moral*, as well as *natural* ability to comply with the commands of God, is necessary to render us free agents. Hence, he does not seem to consider man as a free agent in respect to keeping, or not keeping, the *law*, but barely "with regard to those objects which God in his *gospel* presents to him, as a fallen creature, to recover him from his fallen state." (XIII. 36.) And yet he speaks, in the same page, of his thus being a "subject of God's *moral* government." Strange, indeed, that he should not be a free agent in respect of the moral law, and yet that he should be a subject of God's moral government; yea, and

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. Psa. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. Isa. liii. 1.

that the moral law should, notwithstanding, be to him "a rule of life." (XIII. 61.) If we are not free agents in respect of the moral law, we cannot be the subjects of God's moral government, but, rather, of some supposed evangelical government.

A free agent is *an intelligent being who is at liberty to act according to his choice, without compulsion or restraint.* And has not man this liberty in respect of the *law*, as well as of the *gospel?* Does he, in any instance, break the law by compulsion, or against his will? Surely not. It is impossible the law should be broken in such a way; for where any thing is done without, or against volition, no equitable law, human or divine, will ever blame or condemn. Mr. T.'s great mistake in these matters lies in considering a *bias of mind* as destructive of free agency. If a bias of mind to evil, be it ever so deep-rooted and confirmed, tends to destroy free agency, then the devil can be no free agent; and so is not accountable for all his enmity against God. The same may be said of those who are, as Mr. T. expresses it, become "unimpressible," (XIII. 28.) and *cannot cease from sin.* It is not sufficient to say, that "they *had* power to receive the word till they wilfully resisted, and rejected the truth;" if Mr. T.'s notion of free agency be just, they ought to have had power *at the time*, or else not to have been accountable. Mr. T. constantly reasons from *natural* to *moral* impotency, and, in these cases, admits of no difference between them; but he knows, that, in respect of the former, if a man is unable to perform any thing that is required of him *at the time*, he is, to all intents and purposes, excusable; yea, though he may have brought his impotency upon himself by his own crimes. Suppose, for example, a man destroys both health and reason by mere debauchery and wickedness, so as to become a poor ghastly ideot, can any one suppose that, *in that state of mind*, it is just to require him to perform the business of a man, or to punish him for his omission, under the pretence that he *once had* reason and strength, but, by his wickedness, had lost them. No: far be it from either God or man to proceed in this manner! If, then, there is no difference between natural and moral impotency, those who are become

"unimpressible," and are given up of God to sin, (as were Judas, and the murderers of our Lord,) are not free agents, and so are not accountable beings.

Farther: If a bias of mind to *evil*, be it ever so confirmed, tends to destroy the free agency of the subject, the same would hold true of a bias to *good;* which Mr. T. indeed seems to allow; for he asks, "Are not free agents capable of sinning?" (XIII. 51.) As if it was essential to free agency, to be capable of doing wrong. But has Mr. T. forgot, that neither God, nor Christ, (even when upon earth,) nor saints in glory, are capable of doing wrong? The bias of their minds is so invariably fixed to holiness, that it is impossible they should, in any instance, deviate from it: and yet will he deny them to be the subjects of free agency?

Mr. T.'s ideas of free agency have probably led him into some others, respecting the nature of *that sin* which men commit as the effect of Adam's transgression. (XIII. 52.) His language on that subject, all along, implies, that all the sin which men commit as the effect of Adam's transgression, must be *involuntary;* as though it was something that operated within them, entirely *against*, or at least *without*, their consent. If this supposition were true, I should not wonder at his pleading for its innocence. If men were under *such* a necessity as this of sinning, I should coincide with Mr. T. in denying that they were accountable for that part of their conduct. But, the truth is, there is no such sin in existence. Sins of *ignorance*, under the law, were not opposed to *voluntary*, but to *presumptuous* sins (Numb. xv. 27—31.) There are many sins that men commit, which are not presumptuous, but none which are, in every sense, *involuntary*. Mr. T. perhaps, will allege the apostle's assertions in Rom. vii. that what he *would not*, that *he did*. He makes much ado (XIII. 43.) about this, and my supposed inconsistency, but all he there says was, I think, sufficiently obviated in my first treatise. After all, Mr. T. does not really think there *are* any *sins*, besides what are *voluntary*. Though he talks of believers being guilty of such sins, and of Christ's dying to atone for them; (XIII. 52.) yet he would not allow it to be just for any man, *in his own person*, either to be blamed or punished for them: no; he contends that it is the *concurrence*

of our wills that denominates us blameworthy; (XIII. 41.) which is undoubtedly true, in respect of all personal blame.

When Mr. T. reviewed my first publication, he spake much in praise of the distinction between *natural* and *moral inability*, and of the *perspicuity* of the manner of stating it. (IX. 9. 63, 64.) Surely he must not, at that time, have understood what he applauded; and having since discovered this sword to have two edges, the *one* equally adapted to cut up *Arminianism*, as the *other* is to destroy *Antinomianism*, *he* has now changed his mind, and is striving to prevent its efficacy by giving another meaning to the terms, and thus involving the subject in darkness and confusion.*

By *natural power*, Mr. T. *now* understands a power that is barely adapted to the performance of *natural things;* and by *moral power* a power for *moral things*. (Letter VI.) But natural power as I, and *all* others who have heretofore written upon the subject, have used it, is as much conversant with *spiritual* as with *natural* things; yea, and as much with *wicked* things as with either of them. It requires the same members, faculties, and opportunities, to do *good* as to do *evil;* to perform spiritual, as to perform natural actions. To pretend, therefore, to distinguish the use of these terms by the objects with which they are conversant, can answer no end but to perplex the subject.

But *is natural power sufficient for the performance of moral and spiritual actions?* Mr. T. says, No; and so say I, in

* Had these terms, or the distinction they are used to specify, been a new invention of my own, there would have been less room to have complained of this treatment; but it appears, to me, a strange, unwarrantable freedom, when we reflect that both had been used in exactly the same sense, by a great number of respectable theological writers. Whereas Mr. T.'s new sense of them is entirely unprecedented; though, no doubt, the most rash and ignorant of the Pseudo-Calvinists would find it suited to subserve their denial of all obligation upon natural men to perform any thing spiritually good. But let men, as they value their souls, be first well assured, such an evasive distinction will be admitted at the day of judgment, before they dare to apply it to this sin-extenuating purpose. I do not charge Mr. T. with intending to put weapons into the hands of deluded Antinomians; but I beseech him to consider how readily they would make their advantage of such a distinction, if once admitted.

one respect. But he concludes, therefore, that if God require any thing of a moral or spiritual nature of any man, it is but right that he should furnish him with *moral* power for the performance of it. Thus he, all along, represents moral ability as if it were some distinct faculty, formed by the Creator for the performance of moral actions, while natural power is given for the performance of natural actions; and thus the reader is led to imagine, that God is as much obliged to furnish sinful men with the one, as with the other, in order to render them accountable beings. Whereas *moral* power is not power, strictly speaking, but a heart to use the power God has given us in a right manner. It is *natural* power, and that only, that is properly so called, and which is necessary to render men accountable beings. To constitute me an accountable being, it is not necessary that I should be *actually disposed* to holy actions, (which is the same thing as possessing a moral ability,) but, barely, that *I could do such actions, if I were disposed.* Indeed, notwithstanding all that Mr. T. has written to the contrary, and by whatever names he calls this power, natural or moral, he himself means nothing more. He does not mean to plead for its being necessary that men should be *actually possessed* of holiness, in order to their being free agents; but, merely, that they *might* possess it, *if they would.* He only pleads, in fact, for what I allow; and yet he thinks he pleads for something else, and so goes on, and loses himself and his reader in a maze of confusion. It is not enough for Mr. T. that I allow men may return to God, *if they will;* they must have the power of *being willing, if they will:* (XIII. 57.) but this, as we shall soon see, is no more than having the power of being *what they are!* I represented this matter in as forcible a manner as I could in my Reply; (p. 49.*) and it is a poor answer that Mr. T. makes to it; (XIII. 58.) as though I were out of my province in writing about the *meaning* of my opponent. Surely it is a lamentable thing, if the meaning of an author cannot be come at by all he writes upon a subject. If what I imputed to him was not his meaning, why

* Page 289 of this volume.

did he not give it in his next performance? "Is it uncandid to conclude he had no other meaning to give?"

I am, &c

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir,

WHEN I affirmed natural power to be sufficient to render men accountable beings, Mr. T. puts me upon *proof;* (XIII. 56.) and, what is more, supposes that I have acknowledged the contrary in my former treatise. Whether I have not *proved* this matter already; whether Mr. T. has not *allowed* me to have proved it; and, whether what I say elsewhere is not in perfect *consistency* with it; shall be examined. Meanwhile, let us follow Mr. T. in his *three-fold* argument for the supposed innocence of *moral impotence:* "If men could never avoid it, cannot deliver themselves from it, and the blessed God will not deliver them, surely they ought not to be punished for it, or for any of its necessary effects."* Mr. T. complains heavily of my treating these subjects *separately*, which he wished to have considered *conjointly*. Well: there was an answer, though short, in p. 29 of my Reply,† to the whole conjointly considered; and if he would solidly have answered *that* only, he might have been excused from all the rest.

But farther: I can see no justice whatever in his complaint. If three things, all together, constitute a moral inability blameless, it must be on account of some *tendency* that each of those three things has to such an end, separately considered. What Mr. T. has said of man's being composed of *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*, (XIII. 38.) does not prove the contrary to

* This, the reader will observe, is Mr. T.'s own way of stating it, (XIII. 37.) who always chooses to represent *moral* inability in terms which are properly applicable to *natural* inability only; and hereby it is that his positions wear the face of plausibility.

† Pages 264, 265, of this volume.

this; because, though *body* does not constitute a man, nor *soul*, nor *spirit* separately considered; yet they each form a *component part* of human nature. If it could be proved, that body, soul, and spirit had neither of them any *part* of human nature, separately considered; that would prove, that, all together, they could not constitute a man. Suppose A. owes B. thirty pounds, and proposes to pay him in *three* different articles. Accordingly, A. lays down ten pounds in cash, ten pounds in bills, and ten pounds in grain. B. refuses each of these articles in payment: 'for,' says he, 'your cash is all counterfeit, your bills are forged, and your grain is damaged to such a degree as to be worth nothing.' A. replies, not by admitting, that, unless each article can be proved to be of value, separately considered, he cannot, in justice, desire the whole to be accepted; but, by complaining of B.'s unwarrantable manner of separating the articles, and examining them apart: as if he should say, 'Though the cash may be counterfeit, the bills forged, and the grain worthless, *separately* considered, yet, *all together*, they make up the value of thirty pounds!'

Farther: though all these three things are, in *one place*, mentioned together, yet Mr. T. did not, all along, consider them conjointly, nor has he done so now. There need not be a greater proof of his understanding these subjects *distinctly*, than his attempting to defend them so; which he has done in what follows:

First: he undertakes to prove, that the circumstance of men being born impure, or inheriting their propensities from their first parent, does excuse them in being the subjects of those propensities. (XIII. 39.) *Original sin*, to be sure, is a mysterious subject. There is a difficulty attending the existence of evil in the souls of all mankind, upon every hypothesis; but it becomes us, as Mr. T. observes, to hearken to "scripture evidence," and to admit it as decisive: and, after all, I believe the scriptural account of the matter will be found to have the fewest difficulties of any. Some, with Pelagius, deny the thing itself, and maintain that human depravity comes entirely by *imitation*. Others admit the fact, that we "are depraved by Adam's transgression," but deny the guilt of such depravity, on that account: this appears to

be the case with Mr. T. Others admit both the *fact* and the *guilt* of our depravity, notwithstanding: this is my sentiment. Though Mr. T. admits that men are born "impure," and that this impurity is their "depravity," a depravity which David, in Psa li. 5. "confessed and lamented;" yet he maintains all this to be *blameless*;* and, all along, seems to claim it as a matter of justice, either to stand upon his own ground, or to receive the grace of the gospel, as an equivalent for it. The depravity of our nature, then, is not the *fault*, but the *misfortune* of it. It is, however, allowed to be that which is "our *ruin*, in that it deprives us of happiness, and exposes us to *misery*:" (XIII. 41.) that is, to *undeserved* misery; for such it must be, "be the misery what it may," if it be inflicted without blameworthiness in the subject. Surely such a constitution must have been very *unrighteous*, and men must have been very much injured, after all, to be *ruined* by *that* in the guilt of which they have no concern, either personal or relative. Mr. T. may well represent it as an inducement for God to give his Son to die for them, (XIII. 81.) if it were only to make them amends for such an injury; and especially as he considers God himself as the author of our native depravity, in constituting the union between Adam and his offspring. (XIII. 62.) To be sure, his scheme is so far consistent. There is only this difficulty remains, how shall we reconcile all this with the *scriptures*; and with either the *justice* of the Lawgiver, or the *grace* of the Saviour? For it seems, to me, that both law and gospel must surely be overthrown by such an hypothesis.

* By the way, is it not rather extraordinary, that Mr. T. after distinguishing between *impurity* and *sin*, *impure propensities* and *evil dispositions*, *depravity* and *blameworthiness*, *confessing* iniquity and taking shame and blame to ourselves on account of it, should exclaim against dealing in *metaphysics*? Verily, a man had need be endued with something more than metaphysical skill to make distinctions where there is no difference. "I do not understand relative blame," says Mr. T. Then, obviating an objection of mine, he asks, "But how then can they be said to be born in *sin*?" and answers, "If I use the expression, I mean they are born impure." (XIII. 40.) Be it so; what does David *mean*? He did not say, 'I was born impure,' but, *I was shapen in* INIQUITY, *and in* SIN *did my mother conceive me*.

The scriptures represent God as a just being, who will by no means inflict punishment where there is no guilt. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. To crush under feet all the prisoners of the earth—to subvert a man in his cause, Jehovah approveth not.—Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.** Surely, then, we might conclude, even though an apostle had never told us so, that *death* would not have *passed upon all men, by one man's sin*, if in that sin, some how or other, *all* had not *sinned*. Surely death would not have reigned in the world, over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, if *sin* had not thus been *in the world*, as its procuring cause. This argument (from Rom. v. 13, 14.) was urged before: why did not Mr. T. reply to it? "Is it uncandid to conclude it was because no reply could be made?"

Farther: the scriptures represent the whole world as *guilty before God*—as void of every claim, except it be that of *shame and confusion of face*. Jehovah speaks of himself as being at perfect *liberty* to save, or not to save, men; and as being determined to exercise it too: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

Once more: the scriptures represent the gift of Christ as being of mere *grace*, and the greatest instance of *love* that ever was displayed; and that, because it was altogether *contrary to our deserts*. Christ is nowhere represented as dying for us out of pity for the injury that we had received from the first covenant, but, on the contrary, as being actuated by mere self-moved goodness: *Herein is love*, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, *but that God loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—Christ died for the* UNGODLY. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet* SINNERS, *Christ died for us.*† So also the whole of our salvation is always represented, not as making *us* amends for an injury,

* Lam. iii. 33—36. Job xxxiv. 12.

† 1 John iv. 10. Rom. v. 6—8.

but as of mere *grace*, which God might, without any blemish on his character, have for ever withheld. The whole Epistle to the Romans is written with the very design to cut off all claim, to prove that *all are under sin;* and, therefore, that justification and salvation are altogether of sovereign grace. The Epistle to the Ephesians is written in much the same strain, especially the Second Chapter, wherein the apostle rises in gradation from what they were by practice, to what they were *by nature*, namely, *children of wrath, even as others;** and all this to prove what he immediately asserts, that *by* GRACE *we are saved.* Yes, the whole tenour of scripture breathes this language: *I wrought for my name's sake —Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you!*

'But do not "the children of traitors" frequently suffer for their father's crimes, even though they were no way concerned in their guilt?' (XIII. 40.) Answer, It is not just, for the children of a traitor to suffer the loss of any *natural* right, or to be exposed to *death*, or *any punishment*, for that in the guilt of which they have no concern; neither do they, where they are under just laws. (Deut. xxiv. 16.) There is no such union subsisting between a parent and a child, as between Adam and his posterity. They are not *one* in law; the one therefore, cannot justly suffer punishment for the other's crimes. No one pretends that it is right to punish them with *death*, or any corporal punishment. God, to be sure, has a right to inflict death where he pleases; as upon the children of Achan; and that, because all men have forfeited their lives to him: and such an instance of displeasure upon a man's family might tend to deter others from the like wickedness: but the children of a traitor have not forfeited their lives to a civil government, and, therefore, they cannot justly be taken

* But "the words *by nature*," says Mr. T. "relate not to our birth, but to the state in which we lived in sin, before our conversion." (XIII. 42.) Let the reader look at the passage, (Ephes. ii. 3.) and judge if it is not a gradation, from what we are by *practice*, to what we are by *nature*. But, suppose it to relate, in a general way, to our unconverted state, the question is, How came that state to be called a state of *nature*, but because it is not accidentally acquired by mere imitation, but is the state in which we are born into the world?

away. The only thing that befals them is *loss*: and as to that, they may *miss of what would have been* their social privileges, such as honours and property, had their father died in possession of them; but, as they were never theirs, properly speaking, they could not be deprived of them. They had no *natural* right to them, nor any right at all, but by their relation to their parent; and the parent, having deprived himself of them, could not convey them to his posterity.*

* Perhaps as near a resemblance as any, to that of the divine conduct, which relates to Adam and his posterity, will be found in God's treatment of *a nation*, or body politic. God, in his providence, deals with a nation as if it was *one person*. Thus God covenanted with Israel, not merely with those who existed at the time, but with their unborn posterity. Deut. xxix. 14, 15. And thus the crimes of a nation often accumulate from generation to generation, like those of an individual from youth to age. Moab, or the nation of the Moabites, is said to have *been at ease from his youth, and to be settled upon his lees*, &c. that is, from his first beginning to be a nation. Jer. xlviii. 2. At last, divine vengeance falls upon some one generation, like as a judgment befalling a man, in his old age, for the crimes of his whole life. Individuals, in such seasons, may be comparatively innocent; but yet, being members of a society, which, *as such*, is deeply involved in sin, they partake of a kind of *relative guilt*. Considered as individuals, they are only answerable for their own personal faults, but, as members of society, it is otherwise. Thus the returning captives confessed their national guilt, saying, WE *have done wickedly, and all this is come upon us because of* OUR *sins*. Neh. xi. 33. 37. Both Ezra and Nehemiah, no doubt, joined in this confession, though we have no reason to think that their conduct, as individuals, had been such as to draw down the vengeance of God upon their country. God speaks of the whole human race, in relation to their first head, as he would speak of a nation. Speaking to Israel, he says, *I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed, how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?* And thus of the whole human race, *God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions*. Eccles. vii. 29. This is, undoubtedly, spoken of the whole species; but it cannot be said, of the whole species, that they were made *upright*, any otherwise than as having a kind of existence in their first parent. Mr. T. himself, when he can get out of a difficulty no other way, will acknowledge such a union between Adam and his posterity, as that what was possessed by him was possessed by them. He talks of God originally giving man power to keep the law; and of this making man's condemnation, for the breach of it, a matter of justice. (XIII. 130.)

But it is suggested, that we might as well be "*commended* for what Christ did," and for the effects of our constituted union with *him*, as *blamed* for what Adam did, and the effects of our constituted union with *him*. (XIII. 39.) This objection has been thought as plausible as any thing Mr. T. has advanced; and yet, if I am not greatly mistaken, there is one part of it, at least, that will entirely overthrow his own hypothesis. Admitting that we, in no sense, are praiseworthy on account of what Christ has done, I question if it will follow, that we are in no sense blameworthy for what Adam did. It does not appear, to me, a just conclusion, that, because favours may be conferred without *merit;* therefore punishment may be inflicted without *demerit*. But, suppose this did follow, and that we are, in no sense, blameworthy for the sin of Adam; yet it does not follow, that we are not blameworthy for any of its *effects*. The case from which Mr. T. argues, will prove the very reverse of this. He supposes, that we are not praiseworthy for the *effects* of our union with Christ, (XIII. 39.) than which there can hardly be a greater mistake. Is not all heart-holiness, and, indeed, every thing in us that is truly *commendable* and *praiseworthy*, the *effect* of our union with Christ? I hope Mr. T. will not deny this, though he so strangely overlooked it. Now, if holiness of heart may be, and is *commendable*, notwithstanding its being the effect of our union with Christ; then, according to his own reasoning, unholiness of heart may be blameworthy, notwithstanding its being the effect of our union with Adam.

It ought to be observed too, that *this* is the very question in debate between us in this place. The point that I endeavoured to prove, was, *not* that we are to blame for Adam's transgression; (this was only a question that occurred incidentally;) *but* that a *moral inability, or evil propensity of heart, in an intelligent creature, is blameworthy*, NOTWITHSTANDING *his having been born the subject of it*. So I had stated it in my Reply, (p. 33.*) and this, I hope, has been fully proved; and that, from Mr. T.'s own premises.

It may be farther remarked, upon this subject, that, though the holiness of believers is the necessary, or certain effect of

* Page 268 of this volume.

their union with Christ, yet they are not the subjects of it by compulsion, or any kind of *natural necessity;* but what they are, they freely choose to be;—and will it not hold equally true concerning the unholiness of sinners, that, though it may be the effect of Adam's fall, yet, as they freely choose to be what they are, it is improper to represent it as that which they possess by a *natural necessity?*

But, whether the words *natural* necessity, or inability, be retained, or given up, in this matter, Mr. T. insists upon it, that our depravity comes upon us *according to the nature of things;* that is, if I understand him, according to the *established law*, or *settled order* of things; and this he thinks equivalent to a *natural necessity*, and must, therefore, denominate it blameless. (XIII 62.) But if Mr. T. can *thus* prove our native depravity blameless; I think I can, by the same mode of reasoning, prove all the fruits of it to be blameless too. Is there not a *settled order*, or an *established law*, of some sort, for the operations of the human mind, and, indeed, for all human actions? Is it not according to the *laws of nature*, according to *the nature of things*, that a man always chooses *that* which, all things considered, appears, in the view of his own mind, the most agreeable; and pursues, if he have opportunity, that which, all things considered, is the object of his choice? It is impossible that a man should choose, in any instance, that which, at the same time, and in the same respects, all things considered, appears, in the view of his mind, disagreeable; and refuse that which is agreeable. And it is equally impossible, that he should act in contradiction to his prevailing choice. An evil tree, according to *the nature of things*, will bring forth evil fruit; and a good tree will bring forth good fruit; and, no less certainly, will "wickedness proceed from the wicked," according to the proverb of the ancients and the manifest implication of our Lord's words, (Matt. xii. 33, 34.) But does it thence follow, that the evil fruit produced by a bad heart, comes by a natural necessity, and is blameless? Which way will Mr. T. take? Will he *deny* an established order in the human mind, and maintain that we choose totally at random, without any respect to what is agreeable or disagreeable in the view of the mind; that we act without any necessary connexion with our pre-

vailing choice; and that we must do so, in order to be free agents? Or will he *admit* of such a connexion in the operations of the mind; and, instead of placing all blame in actions, and none in the state of the mind, as he seems to have done all along, hitherto; will he now exculpate from blame all *those acts* which necessarily arise from choice, and all those volitions which necessarily arise from the view of the mind, and throw all the blame upon the state of the mind itself? He must either do this, or else allow, that what comes to pass according to *established laws*, may, nevertheless, be blameworthy.

Mr. T. imputes our pollution by the sin of Adam to the "direction of the all-wise Creator, who constituted the union between Adam and his offspring" (XIII. 62.) This, to be sure, is the way to prove it innocent; for God cannot be the *author of confusion* in the universe, any more than *in the churches*. But let us beware, lest we *charge God foolishly*. That God was the author of the union referred to, is admitted; but that he is the author of whatever that union may be the occasion of, is not true. May not God be the author of an established connexion between the understanding, will, affections, and actions, without being the author of the depravity of any action that takes place through the medium of that connexion?

I affirmed, that *love to God with all the heart* must, of necessity, imply the absence of all evil propensity to rebel against him. This Mr. T. denies; telling us that I have not *proved* it, and that he apprehends I am not capable of proving it. (XIII. 42.) That is, of proving that a perfect degree of love implies the absence of all aversion! This reminds me of what is said elsewhere, that I have "taken it for granted, that regeneration ALLUDES to that law of nature wherein life precedes motion; but Mr. T. does "not think it will be easy to prove it." (XIII. 15.) It is very true, nothing is more difficult of *proof* than that which is self-evident.

The Apostle Paul declared, that *to be carnally-minded is death—because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they who are in the flesh*, adds he, *cannot please God.* But to be carnally-minded, according to Mr. T. does not de-

serve death; and the very reason which the Apostle gives for its being death, serves, according to his opinion, to prove it innocent; and if so, (unless God be a hard master,) why should not they be able to *please* him? Paul meant to deny that the carnal mind is subject to the law of God *in fact;* but Mr. T.'s reasoning tends to a denial of its being subject to it *in right.* Paul considered unconverted sinners as incapable of *pleasing* God, on account of their carnality; Mr. T.'s argumentation implies that God is, *on that account*, incapable of being *displeased* with them.

When I reasoned thus, "If blame does not lie in being the *subject* of an evil disposition, (or impure propensity, if Mr. T. can tell the difference,) because, as individuals, we could not avoid it; then, for the same reason, it cannot lie in the *exercise* of that disposition, unless that also can be avoided:" Mr. T. replies, that, to indulge, denotes *the concurrence of our wills;* but our wills had nothing to do with the state in which we were born. (XIII. 41.) But this is no answer to the argument. I was not combating any argument of his arising from the concurrence or non-concurrence of our wills, but from what he calls the *want of power.* Men, by his own confession, have not power to go through life free from every degree of the indulgence of their propensities; for that, according to his ideas, would be to keep the law perfectly: but he does not pretend that men can do this; no, not even by the grace of God. (XIII. 61.) But, if the want of power excuses in the one case, it does in the other; for he maintains, that "no man is to blame for what he could never avoid." (XIII. 48.) And so the exercise of an evil propensity may be as blameless as the propensity itself. But, passing this,

Mr. T. thinks, it seems, that, if the *will concur* with an evil propensity, then it becomes blameworthy. I wish that he would abide by this doctrine. If I could depend upon that, I would ask him, Whether he can conceive of an evil propensity in his own mind, any otherwise than as the very state and bias of his will towards evil? To talk of an involuntary propensity in the mind of a rational being, is to talk without meaning, and in direct contradiction to the plainest dictates of common sense. If, then, the concurrence of the will denominates a thing blameworthy, we need have no more

dispute, whether an evil disposition in a rational being, be, in *itself*, blameworthy; seeing the concurrence of the will is included in the very nature of a propensity. Whatever may be said about our propensities at the time we were born, of which we can form but little idea, the question between us is whether an impure propensity, in a rational being, may not be blameworthy, *notwithstanding* its being received by derivation? and Mr. T. seems to think, that whatever impurity obtains, the concurrence of the will is criminal. But this is no more than may be said of all propensity in a rational being; the thing itself being expressive of the bias of the will.

Here I expect Mr. T. will not be satisfied. Yet why should he not? Because he has a notion in his mind, that it is necessary not only that we should be voluntary *in* a propensity, but that we should choose to be of such a propensity before we are so, in order to denominate us blameworthy. It is a leading principle with Mr. T. that men *might have* a moral ability to do good, *if they would;* and that, if this were not the case, they could not be blameworthy: that is, they might have a *good disposition*, if they were but *well disposed!* "I confess," says Mr. T. "it appears, to me, as equitable to condemn a porter because he does not calculate eclipses by the strength of his body, or a feeble philosopher because he does not perform the business of a porter by his refined understanding, as to condemn a man who has only *natural* ability, and never had, and never COULD HAVE any other, because he does not perform moral and spiritual duties." (XIII. 56.) To this also the Monthly Reviewers bear their testimony of applause.*

* The Monthly Reviewers having pronounced Mr. T.'s cause to be *good*, and particularly applauded the above passage, add, "Here is a distinction between what is called a *moral* and a *natural* power, with which these writers perplex themselves. Perhaps, if they introduced the term *rational*, which separates man from the brute, it might assist them a little in the contest." *Review for Sept.* 1788.—I cannot tell what use the Reviewers wish to have made of the term *rational*, nor whether they are serious, or not, in their advice; but, if these gentlemen mean to suggest, that the term *rational* would do to supersede the terms *natural* and *moral*, by answering all their purposes, I cannot, for my part, acquiesce in their opinion.

And elsewhere Mr. T. says, "It is to very little purpose to allege, that Pharaoh and others *could* have complied, *if they would;* if they could never *will* to comply, they could not

I am not inclined to think the Monthly Reviewers destitute of *rational* powers; and yet it is pretty evident they are, somehow or other, *unable* to do justice to Calvinistic writings; or so much as to read them with impartial attention. Let any unprejudiced person look over their Review, and he will see, that, if any thing controversial is written in favour of Arminianism, or Antitrinitarianism, it is generally much applauded; but if any thing comes out in favour of Trinitarianism, or Calvinism, either its weaknesses are exposed, or cold water is thrown upon the subject. See the review of Bampton's *Lectures*, and Burder's pamphlet, Sept. 1788. Were I to look over other numbers of the Review, I might soon add many instances of similar conduct; though, perhaps, few more illiberal than their treatment of Mr. Newton's *Cardiphonia*, Sept. 1781. Vol. LXV. p. 202.

Indeed, one need go no farther in proof of this than to their review of this controversy. In the review of Mr. Taylor's *Nine Letters*, (July, 1787. p. 85.) they say, "This pamphlet may be of some use in enlarging the conceptions of those narrow-minded Christians, who think the kingdom of heaven no larger than the synagogue of their own little flock." Astonishing! When the matter of debate between myself and Mr. T. was *not, in the least*, about the *extent* of the kingdom of heaven. It did not, in the least, respect either the *character* or *number* of those that are good men here, or that shall be saved hereafter; but the CAUSE of their salvation. Is it possible for gentlemen, of only common sense and erudition, to write in this manner upon any subject, except religion? No; mere *rational* powers would there have taught them better. But here, prejudice and supercilious contempt get the better of their understandings, and impel them to write in such a manner as must, in the end, cause their censures to rebound to their own dishonour.

Though the above critique (if it may be so called) displays the grossest ignorance of the subject; yet I really do not think it was for want of *rational* powers. The reviewers are, generally speaking, men of very good abilities; but religion is not their province, nor are they *able* to treat the subject with impartiality. Now, as they unite with Mr. T. in thinking, that, if a man has no *moral power*, that is, no disposition to do right, and cannot find in his heart so much as to use means that he may have such a disposition, then he cannot justly be blamed; they might, one should think, consider the above as a kind apology on their behalf. Should they reply, by maintaining, either that they *have* a moral ability, or disposition, to do justice to Calvinistic writings, or, at least, *might have*, if they would use the means; I should answer, As to the *first*, facts contradict it; and as to the *last*, if they know of any means

justly be punished." (XIII. 57.) So, then, the blame does not lie in the choice of any evil, but in the choice of that choice. Pharaoh's evil, it seems, did not lie in refusing the divine message, but in that, though he could have had a pliable disposition, yet he would not, he was not disposed to be of a good disposition. But still an objection returns: That indisposition, by which he refused to be of a good disposition, could not be blameworthy, unless he could have chosen to be of a better. But whither will this way of reasoning lead us? If a choice, or propensity, cannot be blameworthy, unless it be governed by a previous act of choice, neither can *that* act of choice be blameworthy, unless it is governed by another, and that by another, and so on, in an infinite series. This is metaphysical indeed, or rather hyper-metaphysical. A little while ago, it was thought sufficient if an exercise had but the *concurrence of the will*, that is, if we had but the power of *doing what we please*; but now, it seems, that is a matter that "is very little to the purpose," unless we have also the power of *choosing what we please*.

"Pharaoh," Mr. T. maintains, "*could* have *willed* to comply with the messages that were sent him, or he was not blameworthy." If no more were meant by this, than that he was possessed of the faculty, or *power* of choice, which faculty, were it not for the evil bias with which it is polluted, is equal to the choice of any object that might be presented, I should have no objection to it. But this is not Mr. T.'s meaning: natural power to choose is nothing with him; he is here pleading the necessity of a *moral* power, in order to our being accountable beings. Here, then, I must infer, that Mr. T. does not understand the meaning of his own expressions, no, nor the Monthly Reviewers either; or rather, that the expres-

that persons, utterly void of an inclination, may use, in order to give themselves such inclination, I should be glad if they would begin, and make the experiment.

If, in future, we should see, in the Monthly Review, such manifest partiality against Calvinistic writings as we have seen heretofore, we shall then conclude, that the Monthly Reviewers cannot find in their heart to do justice; nor so much as to use the means that they may have a disposition to do justice; and, if so, then, according to the reasonings which they so highly applaud, we must bring them in guiltless!

sions have no meaning at all. What does Mr. T. maintain? that Pharaoh *could find in his heart*, at the time, to will a compliance? No, he will not say so; for that were the same as *being willing:* but that would contradict fact; for we know he was *not* willing. What, then, does Mr. T. mean? He must mean this, if any thing; that he *could have been willing if he would;* that is, *he could have willed, if he had willed:* but this is no meaning at all, being a mere identical proposition.

It is possible Mr. T. may here exclaim against such a method of reasoning, and appeal to common sense and common equity, "that no person is blameworthy for the omission of what he could not perform." It is granted to be a dictate of common sense and common equity, that no person should be blamed for the omission of that which he could not do, if he would; but not that he should be excused for the neglect of that which he could not WILL, *if he would:* for there is no such thing in being. So far is this from being a dictate of common sense, there is no sense in it, nor do they that talk of it understand what they mean.*

"When people puzzle themselves upon this subject," says a judicious writer, "and insist we are not accountable, and cannot be blamed, any farther than we have a *moral* as well as a *natural* power to do otherways than we do, what their minds run upon is only *natural* power, after all. They may say they know what we mean by moral power, viz. that disposition to do a thing which is necessary in order to our doing it; and they mean the same. But, however, when they get into the dispute, they get bewildered, and lose sight of the distinction. *They* do not suppose an impenitent sinner, going on still in his trespasses, has a *present, actual* disposition, and a sufficiently strong one, to hearken to, and obey the gospel. But something like this seems to be in the bottom of their minds, viz. that he must be *able* to be disposed; or he must have such a disposition as *would* be sufficient *if he was disposed* to make a good use of it. Now, this is only to

* The reader may consult, on this subject, President Edwards *On the Will;* particularly Part IV. Sect. III. IV. XIII. In that piece he will find this notion, with many others upon which Mr. T.'s system rests, thoroughly refuted.

use the word *disposition* improperly, and to conceive of it as a mere natural power; a price in our hands, which may be used well or ill, and which will turn to our benefit or condemnation, accordingly as we are disposed to improve it. The disposition they think of is not in the least degree virtuous, nor anyways necessarily connected with virtuous conduct. But it may lie still, or go wrong, and will do so, unless a man is disposed, and exerts himself to make it act, and keep it right. The sinner is not helped out of his difficulty in the least by having such a disposition as this. Yea, should we go farther, and say, the impenitent sinner might have a heart to embrace the gospel, *if* he would take proper pains in order to it; and he might do this, *if* he was so disposed; and he might be so disposed, *if* he would try; and he could try, *if* he had a mind for it. Yet IF, after all, he *has not* a mind to try, to be disposed, to take any proper pains, to get a heart to embrace the gospel, or do any thing that is good; he is still in as bad a situation as any body supposes him to be in. There is no more hope of his coming to good, so long as this is the case with him, no more possibility of it, nor do we say any thing more in his favour, than if we had only said, as the scripture does of the fool, *There is a price in his hand to get wisdom; but he has* NO HEART TO IT. Pushing the sinner's moral depravity and impotence back in this manner, may get it out of sight of those who cannot see above two or three steps: but this is all the good it can do. There is still a defect in him somewhere; and such a one as will prove his everlasting ruin, unless removed by such grace as he never yet has experienced."*

I am yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir,

THE *second* thing which Mr. T. defends, is what he had written on men's inability to deliver themselves from an in-

* Smalley *on the Inability of the Sinner to comply with the Gospel*, &c. pp. 20, 21.

ability: he conceives it must furnish them with an excuse, "if they cannot deliver themselves from it." This takes up the former part of his Fifth Letter. To be sure, we are now got into the regions of metaphysics, if not beyond them; but it ought to be remembered, that these modes of speaking are of Mr. T.'s own invention. I had before urged the consequences of Mr. T.'s opinion on this subject, as a sufficient refutation of it; but he replies by resuming his old complaint, that I consider those subjects *separately*, which ought to have been considered *conjointly*. This is all that he has advanced in answer to what I have written from p. 37 to 41.*

It should seem, that, in *certain circumstances*, Mr. T. will admit a moral inability, though real and total, to be blameworthy. That is, 1. Where a person brings it upon himself by his own personal wickedness. (XIII. 28.) 2. Where grace is offered to deliver him from it, and he refuses it. In these cases, it seems, Mr. T. will not become the sinner's advocate, but admit him to be guilty. (XIII. 47.) But let it be closely considered, *if the thing itself* is not blameworthy, let us come by it in what manner we may, and though grace should, or should not, be provided to deliver us from it, whether either of the above circumstances will make it so. We may blame a man for his conduct in bringing his mind *into* such an "unimpressible" state; but the state of the mind itself is not *thereby* made culpable. Mr. T. often appeals to common equity among men, whether it is right to punish a man for the omission of what was never within the compass of his power; but it is as plain a dictate of common equity, that a man is not to blame for the omission of what he has not the power to perform *at the time*, as that he is not to blame for what *never was* in his power. If once he had power, he was *then* to blame, but not since he lost it; for, as Mr. T. says, "what a man cannot do, he cannot do." Samson was to blame for losing his hair, and thereby his strength; but not for being unable, *when he had lost it*, to repel the enemy, and preserve his eyes. Neither does the possibility of having our moral impotency removed, make any alteration as to the *thing itself*. If our opposition of heart to God, in itself considered,

† Pages 271—274, of this volume.

is not blameworthy, the circumstance of our having grace offered to deliver us from it, cannot make it so. Suppose a man to be fallen into some deep pit, and that he is weak, and incapable of getting out, but some kind friend offers him his hand; *now*, says Mr. T. the man is to blame, if he does not get out. I answer, He is to blame for rejecting help; but that does not prove him to blame for his own personal *inability*. Thus, by shifting the argument from one to the other of these *three* subjects, and dwelling upon none, Mr. T. shuts out blameworthiness from all moral impotence, *in itself* considered, and so no man is to blame for the enmity of his heart to God, be it ever so great. Though the carnal mind is *enmity against God*, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be: though their ear is uncircumcised, and they *cannot* hearken; though they, being evil, *cannot* speak good things; though they have eyes full of adultery, and *cannot* cease from sin; and though, upon this account, it be *impossible* but that offences will come: yet there is no harm in all this, nothing for which God should speak in such a tone of displeasure; the whole of their blameworthiness consists either in their *getting into* such a state of mind, or in neglecting to use the means of *getting out!* And thus my argument, after all, stands its ground, that, according to Mr. T.'s principles, men are excusable in proportion to the strength of their evil propensities.

Let us next follow Mr. T. in his defence of the *third* branch of his position concerning the non-provision of *grace*. The reader will remember, that the question here is, *not* whether grace IS, or IS NOT provided: *but* whether, *supposing* it is *not*, men are excusable in their non-compliance with the gospel. Mr. T.'s views upon this subject are as a mill-stone about the neck of his system, that must needs sink it in the esteem of all who understand the argument, and expect to be saved by *grace alone*. He talks much of grace, of free grace, and of salvation by grace; and yet it is not more evident that the sun shines at noon-day, than that he makes the whole of our salvation a *debt*, a debt which God, of his "*universal benevolence*," is excited to pay, from the consideration that "we did not bring everlasting misery upon ourselves, nor was it ever in our power to avoid it." (XIII. 81.)

It is pity that we should cover our ideas by improper words. It is evident, Mr. T. means to appeal to the divine *justice*; only he has not courage sufficient to say so, and, therefore, uses the term *benevolence*. Yet if this be the truth, that men are pitiable creatures, much injured by the fall, but no way concerned in the guilt of it, nor in any of its certain effects; and if this be a consideration with the great Jehovah to save them; what a gospel have we sent us at last, and what a representation of the divine character! The Father sends his Son to atone for men's guilt, and deliver them from everlasting misery, from the consideration that there was nothing in that guilt, antecedently to his sending his Son, and offering them grace, that properly deserved such misery, or indeed any misery at all! The covenant which God originally made with man is so severe, that, if he abide by it, he must deal *cruelly* with his rational offspring; so severe, that he cannot stand to it throughout; but is induced, with a view to make the sons of Adam amends for the injury done them by their father's fall, to send them a Saviour, and to offer them assistance, that they may make their escape! Surely, all this is but the just picture of the divine character and conduct, according to Mr. T.'s scheme. But is this the real character and conduct of God? Is mercy indeed built up upon the ruins of equity; or does the *grace* of the second covenant imply a reflection upon the *justice* of the first? Is this the character of that God who declares that men who never heard the gospel of *grace* are *without excuse?* —that *all the world* are become *guilty before Him*;—that salvation is altogether of grace;—that he is not only at liberty to *have mercy on whom he will have mercy*, but will exercise that liberty, and *will have compassion on whom he will have compassion?*

I urged these consequences in my *Reply*, that, according to Mr. T.'s scheme, "making this supposed *grace* the only thing which constitutes men accountable beings, was making it DEBT, rather than GRACE." And what has Mr. T. said, in answer to this objection? (XIII. 49.) "1. When I speak of grace," says he, "I wish to speak of *real*, not *supposed*, grace." That may be, and I hope it is so; but the question is, will his hypothesis coincide with the wishes of his heart on this subject? "2. Suppose," says Mr. T. to his friend, "we excuse

Mr. F.'s play on the word *grace*, which is not in the sentence to which he is making this laboured reply, and his change of *punished* for *accountable;* yet still, the position to which he refers, does not speak of grace as the *only* thing which renders men accountable. You remember, Sir, the position is, 'If men could not avoid it,' &c." Mr. T. seems, all along, to wish to represent me as having bestowed great pains to unravel one poor little period; whereas what I have written about *grace* is not merely in reply to that single period, (as was declared in my *Reply*, p. 29.*) but to the whole of what Mr. T. had written upon the subject, which in that period happens to be nearly expressed. But he denies, that he has represented grace as the *only thing* which renders men accountable; how he can make this denial good, is more than I can conceive. He advances *three* things which, together, would make men *not* accountable. The first *two* of these he admits actually to exist; (IX. 44. 57. 59.) the last, therefore, must be the *only* thing left, which can render men accountable, or, if he likes it better, punishable. But where is the answer, after all, to my objection? Has he proved his notion of *grace* to be any more than *debt?* Not at all, nor so much as attempted it. "Is it uncandid to conclude, that it was because he felt the attempt would have been in vain?" It was farther objected, that, according to Mr. T.'s scheme, there was no need for Christ to have died at all; and that, if the Divine being had but let men alone, and had not provided any grace for them, they had been all very innocent; and, if justice had but been done them, very happy. To this Mr. T. replies, by asking, 1. Whether I can prove that, without the bestowment of grace, there would ever have been any men to be free from criminality? "Can he prove," says he, "that Adam would not have died immediately, according to the threatening, if grace had not been given in the promise." (XIII. 50.)—"*According to the threatening*," that is begging the question. The question is, whether that threatening implied in it the immediate and actual execution of corporal death? If what Mr. T. says elsewhere is true, namely, that Adam's posterity were, by his fall, "exposed to *misery*, whatever that misery be," (XIII. 41.)

* Page 264 of this volume.

it could not; for non-existences could never be exposed to misery of any kind. If in Adam *all died;* if by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death *passed upon all men*, for that all have sinned; this must imply the *existence* of all men; for death cannot pass upon non-entities. But it is asked, 2. "Suppose Adam had not died, can Mr. F. prove that Adam's posterity would have been sent to hell for their father's sin, or for any of its necessary consequences?" Suppose they had not, and ought not, then it only tends to confirm my reasoning, rather than to refute it; which was to prove, that, if things are as Mr. T. represents, men might have been innocent and happy, if Jesus had never died; and so, that the gift of Christ and the gospel was no real benefit, but rather a curse upon the world, as it is this only that has rendered men capable of sinning, so as to become *everlastingly* miserable.

The remaining questions (XIII. 52.) have, for the substance of them, been already discussed. (*Reply*, 46—49.*) Neither are they in point to the present subject in debate. They contain a question of *fact;* but that which is now in discussion is a question of *right*. Were I to admit the universal extent of Christ's death as a *fact*, and the utmost advantages as resulting from it; still I should reprobate, with all the powers of my soul, the principles upon which Mr. T. pleads for it, as destructive of the grace of the gospel, and hostile to the throne of God.

Mr. T. had maintained (IX. 57. 59.) 1. That man was so reduced by the fall, as to be totally unable to do any thing really good: 2. That, if he had been left in this condition, he would not have been to blame for not doing it, but that his inability would have been his excuse; yea, *let his practices have been as vile as they might*, upon the supposition of grace not being provided, he declares, that he *would have been excusable*, and that all real good whatever might be denied to be the duty of the unprincipled mind." From hence I concluded, that, if it were so, then Christ did not die for the *sins* of any man; because, antecedently to the consideration of his death, and of grace being given in him, there was no *sin*, or

* Pages 278—281 of this volume.

blameworthiness, to atone for. What a bustle does Mr. T. make concerning this conclusion; calling it "a wonderful passage," and the reasonings "*mere parade;*" imputing it to the "imbecility of the human mind, and to the disadvantageous situation to which the most upright disputant may be reduced," &c. (XIII. 52.) I smile at this friendly apology; but must own it appears, to me, more adapted to himself than his opponent. I before wrote in the language of diffidence: the consequences of Mr. T.'s sentiments appeared so eversive of the whole gospel, that I could hardly help suspecting I must have mistaken him, somehow or other. Accordingly, I gave him a fair opportunity to clear himself, if he could. But it is now time for that language to be laid aside. He has tried to defend his hypothesis, but it is absolutely indefensible.

What has Mr. T. said in answer to my reasoning? Why he has, as usual, asked a number of *questions* * "Suppose Christ had never come, and no grace had been provided, does not Mr. F." he asks, "allow that man is a free agent, and therefore, might have sinned voluntarily?" (XIII. 51.) Yes, I do: I suppose the devil to be a free agent, though his heart is, and ever will be, invariably set in him to do evil; but the question here is, not what *I* allow, but what *Mr. T.* allows. Though *I* allow man to be a free agent, independent of the grace of the gospel, *he* does not: he considers *moral* as well as *natural* necessity as inconsistent with free agency; that, if no grace were provided, "let a man's *practice be as vile as they might*, he would be excusable." And it was from *his* supposition, and not from mine, that I was reasoning.

But he asks farther, "Is nothing done wrong in this world but what is the necessary and unavoidable effect of Adam's transgression? Are not all our *voluntary* sins justly chargeable upon us?" (XIII. 52.) I answer, I know of no such necessity that impels men to sin *in*voluntarily; and as to the evils that are *now* done in the world, or not done, they are nothing at all to the point; nor whether they are done in consequence of Adam's transgression or not. Suppose they are

* Mr. T. it seems, expected to be answered in a way of direct reply. But it would fill a volume of no small size, only to give a direct answer to all his and Mr. Martin's *questions*.

done simply in consequence of men's own free agency; will Mr. T. allow that they would have had that free agency, and have been accountable beings, without the death of Christ and the grace of the gospel? If he will *not*, the consequence still remains unmoved, that, according to him, 'Christ did not come into the world to save men from sin, but, rather, to put them into a capacity of sinning; as it is in consequence of his death, and that alone, that guilt becomes chargeable upon them.' But if, on the other hand, he *will* allow this, he must, in so doing, disallow of the substance of all his former reasonings. Particularly, he must disown that extravagant language, that, "if my principles are true, *let a man's practices be as vile as they may*, he may excuse himself from blame."

"Mr. F. justly observes," says Mr. T. "that I suppose fallen man really and totally unable to do good; and I explained my meaning, by saying *spiritually* good: but is there no medium between doing what is *spiritually good*, and going to the utmost lengths of wickedness? Are men under the necessity of working all abominations, because they cannot, without divine grace, serve God spiritually? Do not men work these abominations? Did not Christ die to atone for them? Did he not then die for OUR SINS?" (XIII. 52.) Now Mr. T. thinks he has escaped the charge. But let it be observed, though, in *one* place, he had used the term *spiritual*; yet, in another, he extended blamelessness to "PRACTICES be they AS VILE as they MAY, if my sentiments were true;" that is, if grace were not provided. Now, whatever medium there may be, between not doing things *spiritually good* and working all abominations, there is none, I should think, between *vile practices* and abominations. Mr. T. therefore, is as far off as ever from removing the shocking consequences of his sentiments.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir,

PERHAPS Mr. T. will again complain, that too much is made of the *Ratio ex concessis* and the *Reductio ad absurdum.* (XIII. 53.) Well, it is not my wish to bear too hard upon him; though, after all, it would have discovered a commendable frankness, consonant to his own profession, (XIII. 15.) to have confessed that he had said rather too much, instead of complaining of me for having improved it against him. But let us take it as he has *now* stated it, that, *without the grace of God*, men cannot do any thing really or *spiritually* good; but they may do some things otherwise good, or, at least, refrain from gross immoralities; and this is all they are obliged to do, antecedently to the bestowment of grace; and, consequently, the whole of their sin consists in the contrary of this; and these are all the sins for which there was any need for Christ to atone. Now, will Mr. T. stand to *this* hypothesis? It is the only ground left him to stand upon, in supporting the body of his system. And, in order to possess *this*, he must retract his extravagant sentence in p. 59 of his *Nine Letters;* and, perhaps, much more. Let him soberly consider, whether he can stand his ground, even here, without giving up at least the *three* following sentiments, each of which he has hitherto avowed, and for one of them most strenuously contended.

1. That the moral law is *spiritual*, and requires love to God with all the heart; and that this law is the rule of life to fallen men, antecedent to, and independent of, the consideration of the bestowment of grace. If nothing but an abstinence from gross abominations is incumbent on men, antecedent to the bestowment of grace; then either the moral law does not require the heart, or men are not under it as the rule of life.

2. That, if unconverted sinners are preserved from the *greatest lengths of wickedness*, it is to be ascribed to the preventing and restraining grace of God. This Mr. T. has hith-

erto avowed. (XIII. 30.) But, if he will maintain the above hypothesis, this also must be given up. The whole of Mr. T.'s argument (XIII. 52.) goes upon the supposition, that, if grace had never been bestowed or provided, yet men might have refrained from gross abominations; for it is brought to prove, that men would not have been *utterly* blameless without the provision of grace; and so that there were *some* sins for Christ to die for, antecedently to the consideration of his death and the grace of the gospel. But, if so, their being preserved from gross wickedness is not, and ought not to be, ascribed to the *grace* of God.

3. That Christ died for the sins of the whole world. I need not prove to the reader, that Mr. T. maintains this sentiment; but, if he will abide by the above hypothesis, this (all-important as he accounts it) must be given up. It is well known, that the far greater part of the world die in infancy; but dying infants, according to the above hypothesis, (and, indeed, according to all that he has written,) can have no sin, in any sense whatever, for which Christ could have to atone. He could not, therefore, die for them; and, as they make the greatest part of the human race, it must follow, that Christ did not die for the sins of one half of the world, after all. Thus Mr. T. by his notion of men being excusable on account of their *moral inability*, is driven to a most painful dilemma: he is driven to maintain, EITHER that men, antecedently to the death of Christ and the grace of the gospel, are not free agents *at all;* are not accountable beings, no, not for even "*the vilest of practices;*" (as he did in his *Nine Letters;*) and then it *follows*, that Christ did not die to atone for the *sins* of any man, but only for Adam's first transgression, there being no sins for which he could have to atone; and that his death, and the grace of the gospel, must be a curse to the world rather than a blessing; as it is in consequence of this, and this alone, that guilt becomes chargeable on men: or ELSE, according to what he has advanced in his *last performance*, that men, without the grace of the gospel, would have been free agents *in part;* that they would have been capable of performing the externals of religion, and refraining from *gross abominations;* that they, as fallen creatures, are accountable for the contrary of these, and for that *only;* and that it is for sins of this de-

scription only that Christ could have to atone;* and then it *follows*, that the law, as a rule of life to *fallen* men, is *not spiritual;* that, if men are preserved from gross abominations, it is not to be ascribed to preventing grace; and that Christ did not die for the sins of all mankind.

Mr. T. it has been observed, has hitherto allowed that the moral law is *spiritual*, and, as such, is the rule of life to fallen men; (XIII. 60.) but his other sentiments will not suffer him, consistently, to abide by this. To be consistent with them, he must either deny the *spirituality* of the law, or else its *justice* and *goodness;* that is, he must deny that it is fit to be a rule of life to fallen men. Mr. T. admits the law, at present, to be *spiritual;* it must not, however, take cognizance of the *state* of the *heart*, or *mind;* the mind may be the subject of an evil propensity, and yet be innocent; (XIII. 42.) so then, the *carnal mind*, which is enmity against God, is, nevertheless, in that respect blameless. All that is forbidden is "the *indulgence* of evil propensity, and the neglect of grace by which he might be delivered from it." Nor are these all the subtractions that Mr. T.'s scheme requires. Even *here*, it is not just that it should require any more than men *can*, some way or other, find in their hearts to give; for he lays this down as a maxim, that *no man ought to be punished for what he cannot avoid.* (XIII. 53.) But if it is not right that the law should require any more than men can, in every sense, perform, or punish them for their defects, then it must follow, that either men can now perform all the law requires of them; or else, that the law is unreasonable, and so can be neither *just* nor *good*, nor fit to be a rule of life to fallen men. Which way will Mr. T. turn himself in this case? Will he affirm, that men now *can*, in every sense, perform all that the law requires? Sometimes, he seems as if he would; for he speaks of the law, as forbidding only the *indulgence* of sin; and of grace, as being provided to deliver us from that. (XIII. 41.) Here, if his words have any meaning, they must mean, that men may, through the grace of God, comply with all the law requires. And yet, in other places, he allows that no

* It is true, Mr. T. talks of Christ having to atone for sins of other descriptions; but, surely, it is quite absurd to speak of his dying to atone for sins, for which we were never blameworthy or accountable.

man, since the fall, possesses an ability, either naturally or by the grace of God, perfectly to keep the law. (XIII. 60, 61.) But what in and out work is here! One of these positions must be retracted; and Mr. T. is welcome to retract which of them he pleases. He may choose his ground. Neither will support him, without giving up the *spirituality*, *justice*, and *goodness* of the law, as a rule of life to fallen men.

If he retract the *first*, and allow that men *cannot*, even with the grace of the gospel, keep the law perfectly; then, he must *either* maintain the law to be unreasonable, *or* give up all his former reasonings, and allow that it is right that God should require men to do that which they are, and always were, and always will be, in this life, *morally unable* to do. If he choose to retract his other position, (XIII. 61.) and maintain, that, by the grace of God, men *are* now able to comply with all that the law requires, and to avoid all that it forbids, still he is never the nearer. This sentiment is as hostile to the *native* justice and goodness of the law, as any position Mr. T. has advanced. For as to what men are able to do *by the grace of God*, that is nothing to the purpose. In order to justify the law, it is necessary that we should, in some sense, be able to obey it, prior to, and independently of, the provisions of the gospel. To introduce the bestowment of grace, in order to vindicate the equity of the law, is injurious to both law and gospel: to the first, as supposing it, in itself, unjust; to the last, as rendering it not grace, but debt. Suppose the king and parliament of Great Britain should enact a law, requiring the inhabitants of any particular town to pay *one thousand pounds* annually, by way of tax. At the time of the law being enacted, those inhabitants were well able to pay it, and afterwards became poor, and entirely unable. The government, however, still continue the law in force, notwithstanding their pecuniary inability. But the Prince of Wales, with the concurrence of the king and parliament, graciously remits, or offers to remit, to these poor inhabitants, what shall be sufficient for the payment of the tax. Quere, 1. Does this remittance render the law which continued to require a thousand pounds, when the inhabitants were unable to pay it, in *itself*, just or good? 2. Is it to the honour of the prince, any more than of the king and parliament, to call such a remit-

tance by the name of *grace*, when its only purpose is to screen the government from the charge of *injustice?* I am persuaded that such a piece of conduct as Mr. T.'s system ascribes to the great God, is what the honourable characters beforementioned would scorn to be engaged in. Such a law, undoubtedly, ought to be repealed. Should it be urged, for its continuance, that it should stand as it was, for the purpose of convincing the inhabitants of their *sin* in not complying with it, (XIII. 130.) they would reply, 'Convince us of sin? no, that it can never do, but rather convince us of its own cruelty and its makers' tyranny.' 'But, perhaps, you have not done so much towards complying with it, as you might have done.' 'Be it so: this can be no proper mean of convincing us of *sin;* let us have a law equal to our capacity, and then, so far as we fall short of it, that will be a proper mean of conviction, but no other.'

The reader will not suppose that I am pleading for the repeal of God's law; I suppose men's natural abilities are still equal to its demands: but my design is barely to show, that, according to the tendency of Mr. T.'s principles, the law cannot be either just or good, and the gospel is not grace, but debt.

Mr. T. often talks of his opponent taking his threefold argument, and answering it conjointly. When an author advances contrary positions, it is very difficult to know what are his real sentiments; otherwise Mr. T. has sufficiently answered himself. 1. He allows that men are unable to keep God's law perfectly. (XIII. 60.) 2. He will not pretend to say, that they ever could so keep it, since they were intelligent beings. (XIII. 60.) And 3. What is more, he does not profess to hold that grace is provided sufficient to enable them to keep it. (XIII. 61.) Here, then, all the three members of Mr. T.'s position concur, respecting men's inability to keep the law perfectly. "They could never avoid it, cannot deliver themselves from it, and the blessed God has not made such provision as is necessary to deliver them:" and yet Mr. T. allows that they *ought* to keep it, notwithstanding; (XIII. 60.) and, it should seem, their not keeping it is their *sin*, of which the law is a proper mean to convince them. (XIII. 130.) The reader is here left to make his own reflections.

But "is it right for a man to be eternally punished for

what he could never possibly avoid? This is the question," says Mr. T. "to which I think Mr. F. with all his ingenious labour, has not attempted to give a direct answer. Yet nothing is done, till a direct answer be given." (XIII. 51.) I reply, 1. If there be any weight in Mr. T.'s reasoning, it must affect *all* punishment, as well as *eternal* punishment:* and if so, the sentence of corporal death, which, in consequence of Adam's transgression, has passed upon all men, and is executed upon millions who have never actually sinned, must be an unrighteous sentence: 2. If man, as a fallen, polluted creature, is blameless, he must, if justice be done him, as such, be unexposed to punishment, either here or hereafter, and consequently must, as such, need no saviour at all. To speak, therefore, of the fall as rendering a saviour necessary, as Mr. T. himself seems to do, (XIII. 140. 142.) or to say, with the

* My good opinion of Mr. T.'s integrity and piety makes me utterly at a loss how to account for the insinuation, that it has been generally acknowledged by the "unhappy men" who deny the eternity of future punishment, and hold with "universal salvation, that, *before* a man can be of their sentiments, he must be a Calvinist." To be sure, we cannot be certain, that no one person who embraced the general-restitution scheme, was weak or wicked enough to drop such an expression; though I never heard of such an instance. But, to justify the manner in which this inuendo is brought in, it ought, at least, to have been a common, repeated acknowledgment, made by some of the most eminent patrons of that system. Surely the late Bishop of Bristol was never led into it by *his* Calvinism: nor have I ever heard of Dr. Priestley or Dr. Chauncey, as suggesting that this was the effect of their former Calvinism. It is very evident that they were first far from Calvinism, before they espoused that notion. I wish Mr. T. (if this paragraph could indeed be his writing, and was not added to his manuscript by some unknown person, devoid of conscience, to blacken Calvinism at any rate;) would favour us with the names of "these unhappy men who have so frequently said" it. Were it needful, I could name a member of Mr. T.'s own church, who has pleaded for universal salvation, without being led into it by any previous Calvinism.

But the *Monthly Review*, for July, 1789, has afforded an opportunity of appealing to Mr. T.'s conscience still more forcibly on this article. Does Mr. T. believe that the gentleman by whom he himself is there abused for his "sulphureous discourse" on the *eternity of future punishment*, could never have treated a scriptural doctrine with so much contempt, if the reviewer had not *once* been a *Calvinist? ! ! !* *Monthly Review*, p. 95.

Apostle, that, *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, must be altogether improper. But perhaps Mr. T. will still complain of the want of a direct answer. Well, if another form will please him better, let it stand thus:

The fall and its necessary effects are what Mr. T. calls unavoidable by us: Christ, by laying down his life, delivered us from the fall and its necessary effects:* Christ died, therefore, to deliver us from what Mr. T. calls unavoidable. But Christ would not have died to deliver us from a punishment which we never deserved. I do conclude, therefore, that we deserve everlasting misery for that which, in Mr. T.'s sense of the word, is unavoidable.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

Dear Sir,

THERE is one question more which Mr. T. holds up in his Sixth Letter, the solution of which goes a great way towards the deciding of the controversy between us: this is, Whether natural power is, to all intents and purposes, sufficient to render us accountable beings in respect of moral or spiritual exercises?

This question I promised to discuss before we had done. Previously, however, to entering upon it, let it be observed, that, if natural power *is* sufficient for the above purpose; and that, antecedent to, and independent of, the bestowment of grace; then five parts out of six, at least, of Mr. T.'s Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Letters are to no purpose. All his exclamations against men being required to perform what they have no *power* to accomplish; blamed for their omission of it, &c.

* Rom. v. 15—21. 1 Cor. xv. 22. 1 Thes. i. 10.

&c. entirely rest upon the supposition that *natural* power is *not* power; or, however, not *such* power as to render men accountable for omitting moral and spiritual exercises. All Mr. T.'s exclamations likewise, in his *Nine Letters*, upon the cruelty of punishing men *more severely*, rest upon this supposition, that *natural power* is of no account; for the cruelty against which he there exclaims, consists in punishing men "for not doing what it never was in their power to do." (XIII. 58.) Now, if the contrary of this can be proved, the body of Mr. T.'s system will be overturned.

When I affirm, that "natural power is, to all intents and purposes, sufficient to render men accountable beings," Mr. T. calls for *proof;* (XIII. 56.) yea, and suggests that I have acknowledged the contrary in my first treatise. Whether I have not proved this matter *already*, and whether Mr. T. has not *allowed* me to have proved it, we will now inquire.

1. I have proved that *natural strength* is the *measure of men's obligation to love God;* being that rule according to which we are required to love him: *Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with* ALL THY STRENGTH. To this Mr. T. has made no reply: but, on the contrary, has allowed my reasoning to be "very conclusive." (IX. 67.)

2. I have proved, that men are obliged to the performance of all duty, and are inexcusable for their omission of it, antecedent to, and independent of the bestowment of *grace*. (*Reply*, p. 50.*) To this also Mr. T. has made no reply; but, on the contrary, has told us, that he "wishes to oppose nothing contained in it, so far as the present subject is concerned." (XIII. 59.) Mr. T. therefore, has fully allowed me to have proved my point, and, consequently, to have proved that the body of his own reasonings is fallacious. Surely Mr. T. must have engaged in a controversy which he does not sufficiently understand; how else could he allow of these sentiments, and, at the same time, maintain their opposites?

To the above arguments might be added, the universal *silence of scripture* in respect of the internal operations of grace being necessary to render men accountable beings, as to moral and spiritual exercises. The scripture is not silent upon what

* Pages 281, 282 of this volume.

it is that renders us moral agents; but never, that I remember, gives us the least hint of *grace*, or the Spirit's operations, being necessary to that end. Whenever God speaks of men in a way of *complaint*, or *censure*, he urges their enjoyment of natural powers, outward advantages, means, and opportunities, as what rendered it fit and reasonable for better things to have been expected at their hands. Rehearsing what he had done for Israel, and complaining of their ungrateful returns, he says, *What was there more to be done to my vineyard,* that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* Isa. v. 1—7. It is plain, here, that God reckoned himself to have done enough for them, to warrant an expectation, speaking after the manner of men, of better returns; and yet here is no mention of any thing but external privileges, means, and opportunities, which were bestowed upon them. It is true, God is said to have *given his good Spirit, to instruct them;* but the meaning of that is, he inspired his servants the prophets, and sent them with repeated messages of instruction; or, as it is explained in the same place, *He testified against them by his Spirit in the prophets.* Neh. ix. 20. 30. These messages and messengers were what Stephen accused them with having *always resisted. Which of the prophets*, said he, *have not your fathers persecuted?* and this he justly calls a *resistance of the Holy Spirit.* Acts vii. 51, 52. When Christ complained of Chorazin and Bethsaida, he made no mention of the *internal* operations of his grace, as the ground of his just expectations, but barely of the *mighty works* which he had wrought among them. Matt. xi. 20—24. So, when the apostle pronounces the heathen to be *without excuse*, and informs us wherefore they were so, he makes no mention of grace which they either had, or might have had, but of the evidence afforded to them by the visible creation, by which, he intimates, that the invisible power and Godhead of its Creator might have been known, had they been but of a right temper of mind. Rom. i. 19. 26.†

* מהלעשות עוד לכרמי See Trueman's *Discourse of Natural and Moral Impotence*, p. 179.

† See Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated*, pp. 121—127.

But Mr. T. thinks I have contradicted all this, by asserting, that "natural ability is *not*, of itself, sufficient for the performance of good." Cannot Mr. T. then, discern the difference between what is sufficient to render us *accountable beings*, and what is sufficient for the *actual performance* of good? If a man is possessed of reason and conscience, he has that, which, to all intents and purposes, renders him an accountable being; and any court upon earth would treat him as responsible for any trust which might be reposed in his hands; but, if he is not possessed of *integrity*, he has not that in him which is sufficient for the security of his master's property, or any service which is truly virtuous.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Dear Sir,

ANOTHER question in debate between myself and Mr. T. is, Whether faith in Christ be a requirement of the moral law? On this subject Mr. T. has written his Seventh and Eighth Letters. If I understand the force of this question in the present controversy, it is this; that it involves the doctrine of a provision of grace, in order to make it equitable. Mr. T. considers faith as an additional obligation to those required by the mora llaw, and, therefore, thinks it a hard and inequitable requirement, if grace is not provided to enable us to comply. (IX. 46.)

On this subject Mr. T. admits, that "the moral law—demands, that whatever is revealed in the gospel, or any other dispensation, be received by all rational creatures to whom that revelation is made." (XIII. 69) This is all that I have pleaded for. I do not suppose the moral law *expressly*, but *radically*, or *remotely*, to require faith in Christ. I only contend, that *that love* which the moral law expressly requires, would lead a person possessed of it, to embrace the gospel. And herein, it seems, we are agreed.

But Mr. T. seems to think it very improper on this account, to say, that faith in Christ is a requirement of the moral law; as improper as to say, that circumcision, baptism, and the Lord's supper, are requirements of that law, on account of their being *remotely* required by it. (XIII. 70.) In short, he seems to consider faith in Christ as a part of positive law, and therefore not, strictly speaking, moral. To which it is replied,

Supposing faith in Christ to be a part of positive law, yet, if compliance with it is justly "demanded by the moral law," which Mr. T. says it is, then it would not follow, that it is such an additional obligation on men, as to require additional grace in order to render it equitable. But farther,

If I understand the nature of *positive* law, as distinguished from *moral*, it is that which arises, not from the *nature of things*, but from the *mere will* of the lawgiver. I am not acquainted with any one *positive* law, the opposite of which might not have been enjoined, in equal consistency with the moral character of God. But it is not so with respect to *moral* obligations: they are such as it would be contrary to the moral character of God not to require, or to require their opposites. Now, surely, the requirement of faith in Christ, where the gospel is proclaimed, has *this* property attending it. It would be inconsistent with the perfections of God to allow men to reject the gospel of his Son, or to feel indifferent towards it.

Surely Mr. T. is much mistaken, in supposing, that whatever is strictly moral is universally and alike binding in all times, places, and circumstances. (XIII. 71.) Obedience to parents, and love to children, with many other duties of the moral law, are binding on persons who have parents to obey, and children to love; but not on those who have none.

Mr. T. in the beginning of his Seventh Letter, takes pains to reconcile his admitting the law to be "an infallible test of right and wrong," and, at the same time, affirming, that "final misery is not brought upon sinners by their transgression of the law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy." (XIII. 65—68.) In the *first* of these sentiments we are both agreed. As to the *last*, I admit that the rejection of mercy *aggravates* men's destruction, and, therefore, is a *cause* of it:

which the scriptures he has cited undoubtedly prove: but that sinners perish *merely* for rejecting the gospel, and *not for transgressing the law*, wants proof. Perhaps it might be much easier proved, that men will not be punished for rejecting the gospel, any farther than as such rejection involves in it a transgression of the law. Mr. T. complains (XIII. 77.) of my supposing, that he makes the gospel a new system of government, taking place of the moral law, and is persuaded I had no authority for such a supposition. And yet, without this supposition, I do not see the force of what he labours to illustrate and establish, as above. If Mr. T. here means any thing different from what I admit, it must be to maintain, that the death of Christ has, in such sort, atoned for the sins of the whole world, as that no man shall be finally condemned for his breaking the moral law, but merely for the sin of unbelief. If this is not his meaning, I ask his pardon for misunderstanding him. If it is, this is, to all intents and purposes, making the gospel a new system of government, taking place of the moral law.

It may, in a sense, be said of a rebel, who refuses to lay down his arms and submit to mercy, (which is a case more in point than that of a condemned criminal in the hands of justice,) that, when he comes to be punished, he will die because he refused the king's pardon; but it is easy to see, that the word *because* is, in this connexion, used improperly. It does not mean, that the refusal of mercy is the crime, and the only crime, for which he suffers; no, this is not the direct or procuring, so much as the *occasional*, cause of his punishment. Rebellion is that for which he suffers; and his refusal of mercy is no farther a procuring cause of it, than as it is a perseverance in *rebellion*, and, as it were, the completion of it.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

Dear Sir,

THE last article in debate between myself and Mr. Taylor, concerns *the extent of Christ's death.* On this subject I stated my own views by way of explanation; offered evidence that Christ, in his vicarious sufferings and death, had an absolute determination to save some of the human race; noticed Mr. T.'s arguments; endeavoured to show the consistency of a limitation of design in the death of Christ with the indefinite call of the gospel, &c. and concluded with some general reflections upon the whole. On these subjects Mr. T. has followed me; and I shall attempt to follow him, with a few additional remarks.

In stating my sense of the limited extent of Christ's death, I admitted that the sufferings of Christ were sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, had the race of mankind, or the multitude of their offences, been a thousand times more numerous than they are, if it had pleased God to render them effectual to that end. I do not consider the necessity of an atonement as arising from the number of sins, but from the nature of them. As the same *sun* which is necessary to enlighten the present inhabitants of the earth, is sufficient to enlighten many millions more; and as the same perfect *obedience* of Christ, which was necessary for the justification of one sinner, is sufficient to justify the millions that are saved; so, I apprehend, the same infinite *atonement* would have been necessary for the salvation of one soul, consistently with justice, as for the salvation of a world.

I admit that "the death of Christ has opened a way whereby God can forgive any sinner whatever, who returns to him by Jesus Christ;" and that, in perfect consistency with the honour of the supreme Lawgiver, and the general good of his extensive empire. "If we were to suppose, for argument's sake, that all the inhabitants of the globe should thus return," I do not conceive that "one soul need be sent away for want of a sufficiency in the death of Christ to render their pardon

and acceptance consistent with the rights of justice." (*Reply*, p. 64.*) All the limitation I maintain in the death of Christ arises from pure *sovereignty:* it is a limitation of *design*.

Now, seeing the above is conceded, whence arises the propriety of all those arguments in Mr. T.'s piece, which proceed upon the supposition of the contrary? The latter part of his Ninth letter, which is taken up in exposing the consequences of maintaining an indefinite invitation without a *universal provision*, overlooks the above concessions. I have admitted the necessity of a universal provision, as a ground of invitation; and that, in *two* respects:—1. A provision of pardon in behalf of all those who shall believe in Christ; 2. A provision of means and motives to induce them to believe. And if no more than this were meant by the term *provision*, I should not object to it. And if by *Christ's dying for the whole world* were meant no more than this, I should not wish to have any dispute about it. Now, if Mr. T. had been disposed to attend to *things*, and not merely to *words*, and to keep to the point in hand, he should have proved, that *this provision*, which *I* admitted, was insufficient to render the invitations of the gospel consistent, and should have pointed out, wherein the provision for which he pleads has the advantage of it. Mr. T. was reminded of this in my *Reply*, pp. 101, 102.† but I do not recollect that he has taken any notice of it.

I do not see, I confess, but that the parable of the marriage feast, Matt. xxii. 4, 5. is as consistent with my hypothesis, as with that of Mr. T. (XIII. 134.) I never supposed but that *all things* were *ready;* or that even those who *made light of it*, if they had come in God's way, would have been disappointed. All I suppose is, that provision was not made effectually to persuade every one to embrace it; and that without such effectual persuasion, no one ever did, or will, embrace God's way of salvation.

Mr. T. proceeds to draw some conclusions which he thinks very unfavourable to my sentiments. "We have no authority," says he, "on this scheme, to ascribe the limitation to any cause *but want of love*." This, he apprehends, is high-

* Page 294 of this volume.

† Pages 324, 325 of this volume

ly derogatory to the honour of God; especially as *love* is his darling attribute. (XIII. 80.) But all this reasoning proceeds upon the supposition that God must be accused of want of love to his rebellious creatures, unless he does, for their salvation, all that he *could* do consistently with justice. Now, let it be observed, Mr. T. sometimes tells us, that he does not oppose the doctrine of an absolute determination for the salvation of some of the human race. (XIII. 92.) But, if he admit *this* as consistent with what he has advanced, then he must admit that God *could* have actually saved the whole world in the same absolute way, and not have suffered any of the human race to perish; and all this, too, in consistency with justice. And yet he does not. What then? According to Mr. T. all must be ascribed to *want of love*. Farther: Mr. T. I should think, will not deny that God *could* have spread the gospel, and that consistently both with his own justice, and with man's free agency, all over the earth, and at every period of time since the fall of man; and yet he has not. Yea, before the coming of his Son, he suffered all nations but one, for many ages, to walk in their own ways; this, according to Mr. T.'s reasonings, must all be ascribed to *want of love*, and so lie as a reproach upon God's character.*

* An objection much like the above was once urged by Mr. Wesley against Mr. Hervey.—"Will God," said Mr. W. "deny what is necessary for the present comfort and final acceptance of any one soul that he has made? Would *you* deny it to any, if it were in *your* power?"—To which the ingenious Mr. Hervey replied, "To show the error of such a sentiment, and the fallacy of such reasoning, I shall just mention a recent melancholy fact: News is brought, that the Prince George man of war, Admiral Broderick's own ship, is burnt and sunk, and above four hundred souls, that were on board, are perished. Six hours the flames prevailed; while every means were used to preserve the ship and crew; but all to no purpose. In the mean time, shrieks and groans, bitter moanings and piercing cries, were heard from every quarter. Raving, despair, and even madness, presented themselves in a variety of forms. Some ran to and fro, distracted with terror, not knowing what they did, or what they should do. Others jumped overboard from all parts; and to avoid the pursuit of one death, leaped into the jaws of another. Those unhappy wretches who could not swim, were obliged to remain upon the wreck, though flakes of fire fell on their bodies. Soon the masts went away, and killed numbers. Those who were not killed thought themselves happy to get upon the floating timber. Nor yet

Mr.T.'s own scheme, as well as mine, supposes, that God does *not* do *all that* for *some* men which he *could*, and which is necessary to their salvation. *He* supposes, that if what was done for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum without effect, had been done for Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, it would have been effectual. (XIII. 25.) And yet this was not done. To what is this to be imputed? Surely God could have sent the gospel to the one, as well as to the other. I see not what cause Mr. T. will find to impute this to, but what he calls a *want of love*.

But Mr. T. suggests, that the conduct of our blessed Saviour, according to my scheme, would resemble that of a person, who should invite another to an entertainment, without a *design* that he should partake of it. (XIII. 84.) But, if a comparison must be made, ought it not rather to be with a person who sincerely invites his neighbours to a plentiful banquet, and never designed any other but that whoever comes shall be entertained with a hearty welcome; but did not design, after all fair means were used, and repeated insults received, to do all that, perhaps, he could, to overcome their pride and prejudice, and so bring them to the entertainment. If this would destroy the sincerity of the invitation, so would *foreknowledge;* and it might as plausibly be objected, How can any being act sincerely in inviting men to partake of *that* which he knows, at the same time, they never will enjoy?

Mr. T.'s scheme appears, to him, to have many advantages; particularly he thinks it is consistent with the general tenor of scripture; clears the conduct of the Father of mercies from the appearance of cruelty; and leaves the obdurate

were they safe: for, the fire having communicated itself to the guns, which were loaded and shotted, they swept multitudes from this their last refuge.—What say you, Sir, to this dismal narrative? Does not your heart bleed? Would *you* have stood by, and denied *your* succour, if it had been in your power to help? Yet the Lord saw this extreme distress. He heard their piteous moans. He was able to save them, yet withdrew his assistance. Now, because you would gladly have succoured them, if you could, and God Almighty could, but would not send them aid; will you, therefore, conclude that you are above your Lord? and that your *loving-kindness* is greater than his? I will not offer to charge any such consequence upon you. I am persuaded you abhor the thought." *Letters to Mr. Wesley*, pp. 288, 289.

sinner justly condemned. But, admitting, for argument's sake, that the divine conduct is thereby cleared of the appearance of cruelty, the worst is, that *this is all*. His scheme barely goes to vindicate the Almighty from *cruelty*. It is *justice* only; there is no *grace* in it, nothing that God had a right to withhold. That which we have hitherto called the *grace* of the gospel, amounts, then, to no more than *this:* it bestows a benefit upon intelligent creatures, without which they could not possibly avoid being everlastingly miserable; and that upon this consideration, that "they did not bring this misery upon themselves, nor was it ever in their power to avoid it." (XIII. 82.) If the Divine Being will do this, he shall be complimented with the character of *benevolent;* (XIII. 80.) but, if not, he must be reproached, "as not *loving*, but *hating* a great part of his rational offspring." O, Mr. Taylor! does any one maintain that men, considered as the *offspring* of God, are the objects of his hatred? Do not *men* sustain a more disagreeable character than *this?* That Deists and Socinians should write in this strain, is no wonder; but how came the language of infidelity to escape your pen?

You will excuse this apostrophe, as I know you unite with me in a personal respect and esteem for my opponent, though you utterly disapprove of his Arminian tenets, which, under, the plausible pretext of *extending* the grace of the gospel, *enervate*, if not *annihilate* it, and leave little or nothing of GRACE, but the name.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER X.

Dear Sir,

MR. T. in his Ninth Letter, remarks on the evidence I offered for an *absolute determination* in the death of Christ to *save some* of the human race. "This sentiment," Mr. T. says, "whether true or false, he does not wish to oppose."

(XIII. 92.) He would not dispute, it seems, about Christ's dying with a view to the certain salvation of some, provided I would admit that, in another respect, he died *for all mankind*. Here, then, we seem to come nearer together than we sometimes are. The sense in which he pleads for the universal extent of Christ's death, is only to lay a foundation for this *doctrine*, that *men, in general, may be saved, if they will;* and this is what I admit: I allow, that the death of Christ has opened a way, whereby God can, consistently with his justice, forgive any sinner whatever, who returns to him by Jesus Christ; and, if this may be called dying for men, which I shall not dispute, then it is admitted, that Christ died for all mankind. But I say, *they will not come to Christ for life;* and that, if Christ had died for no other end than to give them this offer, not one of them would have accepted it.

I hold as much as Mr. T. holds to any good purpose. I admit of a *way* being opened for the salvation of sinners without distinction; and, what is *more*, that an effectual provision is made in the death of Christ, that *that way* shall *not* be *unoccupied;* that he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Without *this* provision, I suppose *no one* would ever have been saved; and the tendency of my reasoning is to prove, that *all* who *are* saved, are saved in consequence of it.

Mr. T. I observe, is not disposed to controvert the doctrine of eternal, personal and unconditional election. (XIII. 100.) I am allowed, therefore, to take that doctrine, together with a special design in the death of Christ for the salvation of the elect, for granted. "This sentiment," Mr. T. says, "whether true or false, he does not wish to oppose." If any thing is necessary to be *proved* in this place, it is, that NONE *but those whose salvation Christ absolutely designed in his death, are eventually saved;* or, in other words, *that* WHOEVER *are saved, are indebted to sovereign and efficacious grace for their salvation.* Now let the reader turn to my *Reply to Philanthropos*, pp. 73, 74,* and he will perceive, that several of those scriptures which prove the doctrine of election, prove also, that *none else are finally saved.* The Apostles addressed *all* the

* Page 301 of this volume.

believing Ephesians, Thessalonians, &c. as having been *chosen in Christ* before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy; as *chosen to salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; as *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;* as being *saved and called with an holy calling*, not according to their works, but *according to God's own purpose and grace, given them in Christ before the world began.* But, if SOME were saved in consequence of such a purpose in their favour, and OTHERS without it, the Apostles had no just ground to write as they did, concerning them all, without distinction. When we are told, that *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*, this implies, as strongly as any thing can imply, that *no more* believed, and were saved, than such as were ordained to eternal life. Christ returned thanks to his Father, that he had *hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father*, said he, *for it seemed good in thy sight.* And again, we are assured by the Apostle Paul, *The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.**

To the above passages, I shall only add one more: 1 Cor. i. 26—29. *Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are* CALLED; *but God hath* CHOSEN *the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.* The reasoning of the apostle, in this passage, plainly supposes the following things:—1. That there is a *special* and *effectual vocation*, which is peculiar to all Christians. The *common* call of the gospel extends alike to rich and poor, wise and foolish, noble and ignoble; but the *effectual* operations of the Holy Spirit do not: it is the latter, therefore, and not the former, which is here meant. 2. That this vocation, common to all true Christians, corresponds, as to the objects of it, with elec-

* Ephes. i. 4. 2 Thes. ii. 13. 1 Peter i. 9. Acts xiii. 48. Matt. xi. 25. Rom. xi. 7.

tion. The same persons, and *all* of them, said to be *called*, are, in the same passage, said to be *chosen;* which agrees with the same Apostle's account of the matter, in Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called.* 3. Vocation not only corresponds with election as to the objects of it, but is itself an *effect* of it. The reason given why the foolish, weak, and despised ones of the world were called, rather than others, is God's sovereign *choice* of them before others. Some might have supposed, if the apostle had not been so particular in his expressions, that the minds of the weak and illiterate, though under a disadvantage in one respect, yet possessed an advantage in another, in that they were more free from prejudice; and that Paul had meant to ascribe their embracing Christ, before others, to the unprejudiced state of their minds; but such a supposition is entirely precluded by the apostle's language. He does not say, the weak and foolish have *chosen God*, but God hath *chosen them;* nor would the other mode of expression have corresponded with the end assigned, to prove that *no flesh shall glory in his presence.*

Many worthy men, who have maintained the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, have, at the same time, admitted, that Christ might be said, in some sense, to have died for the whole world. They distinguished between the *sufficiency* and *efficiency* of his death; and considered the indefinite language of the New Testament, relative to that subject, as expressing the former of these ideas. Thus the English Reformers, who composed the Thirty-nine Articles, appear to have viewed the subject. They fully avowed the doctrine of predestination, and, at the same time, spake of Christ's dying for all mankind. Mr. T. on this ground, affirms, that "the doctrine of the universality of our Saviour's death both is, and, ever since the Reformation, has been, the doctrine of the Established Church." (XIII. 141.) I believe, in the sense abovementioned, it has been so; and if this was all that Mr. T. pleaded for, he might debate the point with whomsoever he pleased, I should not interest myself in the dispute. But the views of Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, Usher, and Davenant, were very different from those of Mr. Taylor. They, as well as Fraser of Scotland, and Bellamy of New England, and many

other anti-episcopalian divines, who have agreed with them in this point, never imagined that any besides the elect would finally be saved. And they considered the salvation of all that are saved, as the effect of predestinating grace, as their works abundantly testify.

Mr. T. may say, The question is, not whether more than those whose salvation is absolutely determined, *will be* eventually saved, but whether they *might be*. "If," says he, "any such election be maintained, as supposes that all the rest of mankind never enjoyed the possibility of happiness, nor had any provision of happiness made for them, but were necessarily, either from eternity, or from their birth, exposed to eternal misery, such election as this, I deliberately consider as opposite to the spirit and design of the gospel, and to the tenor of scripture." (XIII. 100.) To this it is replied, All such terms as *necessary*, *cannot*, *impossible*, &c. when applied to these subjects, are used improperly. They always denote, in strict propriety of speech, an obstruction arising from something distinct from the state of the will. Such terms, in their common acceptation, *suppose a willingness* in us to perform an action, or obtain an end, but that we are hindered by some insurmountable bar from without. Such an idea is always annexed to the use of such terms; and Mr. T. certainly has this idea in his use of the terms *necessary* and *impossible*, in this place. His meaning is, to oppose that doctrine which represents a part of mankind as placed in such circumstances, as that, though they should be willing to embrace Christ, or, at least, willing to use means that they may be willing to embrace him, yet it would be all in vain. But such a doctrine nobody maintains; at least, I had no such ideas of the subject. I have no such notion of election, or of the limited extent of Christ's death, as that it shall be in vain for any of the sons of men *truly* to *seek* after God. If they are *willing* to be saved *in God's way*, nothing shall hinder their salvation; and (if there were any meaning in the expression) if they were but truly willing to use means that they might be willing, all would be clear before them. Now, where this is the case, it cannot be said, in strict propriety of speech, that no *provision* is made for their happiness; or, that any man's salvation is *impossible*, or his destruction *necessa-*

ry; seeing the way of salvation is open to him, if he will but walk in it. All that can be said in truth is, that there is a CERTAINTY in these things. It is *certain*, none will be saved but those who choose to be saved in God's way. It is *certain*, that no one will choose that which is opposite to the prevailing bias of his heart. Yea, it is *certain*, that, whatever means there may be, adapted to the turning of his heart, a man who is *wholly* averse from God will never make use of them with such a design. To make use of a mean, with a view to accomplish an end, must imply the existence of a desire after an end; but a desire after *this* end exists not till the end is accomplished. A desire after a change of heart, is, in some degree, the very thing desired. Besides, if, as Mr. T. says, "men have no *will* nor *power*, nor any concern about the matter" of believing in Christ, "till the Holy Spirit work, awaken, and produce these in his mind," (XIII. 23) then it is *certain*, even from his own premises, that no sinner ever sincerely applied to God for grace before he had it, unless he could be supposed so to apply without will, or power, or any concern about it. These things, I say, are *certain*, according to the nature and constitution of all intelligent beings; and there are other things equally certain, as consequences of them, which are confirmed by scripture testimony. It is *certain*, that none are willing to be saved in God's way, but those who are made willing in the day of his power: it is *certain*, that whenever God makes a sinner willing in the day of his power, he is only working things after the counsel of his own will, executing his own eternal purpose: and hence it is *certain*, that such, and only such, will eventually be saved.

If Mr. T. objects against the *certainty* of any man's destruction, and will have it that this amounts to the same thing as *necessity* and *impossibility;* let him consider, that, as he admits the doctrine of divine *foreknowledge*, he must allow, therefore, that God certainly foreknew the final state of every man. But certain foreknowledge must imply a *certainty* of the event foreknown. If an event is certainly foreknown, the future existence of that event must be certain. If there was an uncertainty respecting the future existence of an event, there must, in the nature of things, be an equal degree of uncertainty in the foreknowledge of that event. Certain fore-

knowledge, therefore, implies a certainty of the event foreknown.

But foreknowledge, it is alleged, has no *causal influence* upon the thing foreknown. (XIII. 108.) Be it so: neither has any purpose in God, that I embrace, any influence towards a sinner's destruction, except in a way of punishment for his sin. The scheme which Mr. T. opposes, so far from representing man as "for ever unable to improve one single mercy of God to any good purpose," represents him as not only possessing great advantages, but as able to comply with every thing that God requires at his hand; and that all his misery arises from his "*voluntary*" abuse of mercy, and his *wilful* rebellion against God. It is not a want of *ability*, but of *inclination*, that proves his ruin.* If Mr. T. had kept these things in view, (which, surely, he ought to have done,) he could not have represented my sentiments in such a light as he has done. (XIII. 106. 108.)

I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

Dear Sir,

MR. TAYLOR often speaks of the language of scripture, as if its whole current was in his favour; as if his opponent was engaged in a controversy in which he had forsaken the word of God. Now, suppose it were allowed, that the language of several passages of scripture, taken in their most literal and plain meaning, proves Christ, in some sense, to

* Though Mr. T. talks of men as having "no *will* nor *power* to believe in Christ, nor any concern in the matter," prior to the Spirit's work; (XIII. 23.) yet that is what I have never affirmed. On the contrary, I maintain, that men have the same *power*, strictly speaking, before they are wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, as after; and before conversion, as after: that the work of the Spirit endows us with no new rational powers, or any powers that are necessary to moral agency: and that, so far from our having "no concern in the matter," we were all deeply *concerned* in *rejecting* Christ, and the way of salvation by him.

have died for all mankind; still, if we will give fair scope to *other parts of scripture*, it appears evident, that in some sense, he died for only a part of mankind. Several of these passages I had produced; to which Mr. T. has said scarcely any thing that deserves being called an answer.

When I argued from Christ's being said to *lay down his life for his sheep;—to give himself for his church, that he might sanctify it*, &c. &c. could Mr. T. think it sufficient to say, "We are nowhere informed that he died for those *only;* this is no proof that he did not die for all mankind: it is certain, that, if Christ died for all, he died for these, because the greater number includes the less, and the whole includes its parts"?* Did not I argue, particularly from Ephes. v. 25, 26. that the death of Christ is there represented as the *result* of his love to the church, in the character of a husband, and which must, therefore, be *discriminating;* that the *church* could not here mean actual believers, because they are considered as *unsanctified*—He died, *that he might* sanctify them;—that Christ did not die for believers, as such; he laid down his life for his *enemies;* that, therefore, it must mean all the *elect* of God—all those that are finally saved? And has Mr. T. answered this reasoning? No, nor attempted it. If, as he often suggests, my cause has so very slender a share of scriptural evidence to support it, is it not a pity but he had given a fair answer to those scriptures which were adduced?

I argued farther, from Christ's dying in the character of a *surety*, that he might *bring many sons unto glory;* might

* XIII. 93. *Go, preach the gospel*, said Christ, *to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* "Believers *only*," say the Baptists, "you see, are to be baptized." 'No,' say others, 'this is no proof that believers *only* are to be baptized. It might be the design of Christ that they should baptize all the world, for aught this passage proves. It is certain, if *all* are to be baptized, *believers* are, because the greater number always includes the less, and the whole includes its parts.' What would Mr. T. as a Baptist, say to this reasoning? It is exactly the same as his own. This very answer I made to Mr. T. before, when he called out for *express testimony* for what I supposed to be a *negative* truth; which answer, I presume, he *totally misunderstood:* otherwise, he could not have given a reply so foreign to the argument.

gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, &c. Mr. T.'s answer to this argument is exceedingly trifling and unfair. I did not "take for granted," that Christ absolutely intended the salvation of all for whom he died, but brought the argument which he quotes, in order to prove it. Nor did I rest my argument from the passages of scripture there cited upon my "*apprehensions*," but upon the *scriptures themselves* which, surely, prove none the less for being introduced in that form. Mr. T.'s remark upon the *Jewish sacrifices*, (XIII. 94.) shows an uncommon inattention to the argument. I observed, by way of introduction, that "sacrifices were offered on account of those, and those only, on whose behalf they were *sanctified*, or set apart; that every sacrifice had its special appointment, and was supposed to atone for the sins of those, and those only, on whose behalf it was offered." All this I supposed would be granted by Mr. T. These observations were my *data*. I then proceeded to apply this reasoning, and to prove who those were for whom Christ was *sanctified*, or set apart as a sacrifice. For this purpose I quoted John xvii. 19. *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth:—they* who were *given him* of the Father. But Mr. T. instead of answering this argument, never looks at it; but takes up a part of my *premises*, without touching upon the conclusion, and then charges me with "reasoning in a circle!" Considering Mr. T.'s abilities, and experience in polemical divinity, is it not astonishing, that things so indigested should proceed from his pen?

I farther argued from the certain *effects* of Christ's death extending not to all mankind, particularly the effect of *redemption*. Mr. T.'s answer to this argument is abundantly more worthy of notice than his answers to those that went before. (XIII. 95.) Nor shall I urge it upon him, that his denial of *general redemption*, while he pleads for the *universal extent of Christ's death*, indicates an idea of redemption as *novel* and unprecedented as my interpretation of the term *propitiation*, which he endeavours to explode on account of its peculiarity. (XIII. 115, 116.) Yet, after all, there is great reason, from the context, to conclude, that what is spoken, in Gal. iii. 13. of Christ's having *redeemed us from the curse of*

the law, being made a curse for us, respects what was effected by the blood of Christ *alone*, when upon the cross, antecedent to our believing in him. When the Apostle speaks of *redemption*, he says, he *hath* REDEEMED US, *being made a curse for us.* When he speaks of blessings resulting from his death, but which do not take place before believing, he immediately changes his manner of speaking, as in verse 14. *That the blessing of Abraham* MIGHT *come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we* MIGHT *receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* We are also said to be *justified* THROUGH *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* Rom. iii. 24. But would it not be making the Apostle speak very awkwardly, to understand redemption, not of what was obtained by the death of Christ *alone*, but of what has its existence *through faith.* Can Mr. T. suppose that the Apostle meant to say, We are justified through the *forgiveness of sins?*

I argued, farther, from Christ's bearing the sins of *many*; particularly from Isa. liii. 12. and I supposed the meaning of the term *many*, in verse 12, might be decided by its meaning in verse 11. "There is no reason," I observed, "that I know of, to be given, why the *many* whose sins he bore, should be understood of any other persons than the *many* who, *by his knowledge are justified*, and who are not all mankind." To this Mr. T. among other things, replies, "*I do not know*, is no argument at all. This may be said on any subject. If the truth lie on the side of Mr. F. he must show us that he *does* know, and *how* he knows it, by fair and allowed rules of interpretation." (XIII. 97.) This, to be sure, is talking in a high strain; but to what purpose? I should have thought explaining a term according to its allowed meaning in the context, *except some good reason could be given for the contrary*, was a fair and allowed rule of interpretation.

Again; I argued from the *intercession* of Christ, in John xvii. 9. *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*, &c. which like that of the priests under the law, was in behalf of the same persons for whom the oblation was offered. Mr. T. here, as usual, calls out for more *proof*, without attending to what is given. (XIII. 99.) He questions two things; *first*, whether this prayer is to be considered as a specimen of Christ's intercession, which he seems to consider as confined

to *heaven:* he means, I suppose, to his state of exaltation. But is not his prayer upon the cross, expressly called in prophecy, *making* INTERCESSION *for the transgressors?* Isa. liii. 12. But, *farther*, he calls for proof that the death and intercession of Christ are of equal extent (XIII. 99.) The intercession of the priests under the law, being on the behalf of the same persons on whose account they offered the oblation, was mentioned. Whether this be a *sufficient* ground to rest the argument upon, or not, one should think it has *some* weight in it; but of this Mr. T. takes no notice.

Finally; I argued, from Rev. v. 9. xiv. 3, 4. where Christians are said to be *redeemed*, or *bought* from among men, which should seem to imply, that all men are not redeemed, or bought. Mr. T. here goes about to refute some things upon which I built nothing. (XIII. 101, 102.) Whether the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, represent the church militant or the church triumphant, or whether the persons in question represent the *whole* church triumphant or only *a part of it*, are matters that signify but little, if any thing, to the point in hand. If the whole, or a part of the church triumphant, were *bought*, or *redeemed by blood, from amongst men*, that is sufficient. Mr. T. deals plentifully, I observe, in such language as, if I had used it, he would have held up in italics to great advantage; such as "*I do not remember—I think*—and *I think*." I do not mention this as improper language: I only mean to remind him, that he should not have been so severe upon me for using the same. As to what he has said upon this passage, I think, upon the whole, it is as forcible as any thing that can be said on his side the question; though it is certain, that the natural meaning of the word ἠγορά̓σθησαν, they were BOUGHT, and its only meaning, that I recollect, in the New Testament, must be utterly cashiered; and, I apprehend, the natural meaning of the whole passage greatly forced, to admit of his interpretation.

I am yours, &c.

P. S. I do not recollect that the *whole world* or *all*, or *all men*, are ever said to be *purchased*, or *bought* or *redeemed*, by the blood of Christ; or that we ever read of Christ's *redeeming*, *buying*, or *purchasing*, any but *his church*. Mr.

T. does not pretend, that all mankind are *redeemed;* but I think, if we take our notions from the New Testament, it is evident, that *buying*, or *purchasing*, when applied to what Christ has done for us, is as much confined to the church, as redemption. Αγοράζω and περιποιέω, which are used to express the ideas of *buying*, *purchasing*, or *acquiring by price*, are applied to the church of God only; as well as λυτρόομαι, to *redeem*, Luke xxiv. 21. Tit. ii. 14. and λύτρον, a *ransom*, Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. In 1 Tim. ii. 6. Christ is said to give himself a ransom for all, ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων; but that will be considered in the next letter. It is said of *the church of God*, that he *purchased* it *with his own blood.* περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος. Acts xx. 28. The final deliverance of the whole collective body of the saved from all remains of natural and moral evil, is called, ἀπολύτρωσις τῆς περιποιήσεως, the redemption of the *purchased possession*, or of the *people acquired*, or *purchased*. Ephes. i. 14. On which Calvin remarks, Περιποίησις, quam latine vertimus *acquisitam hæreditatem*, non est regnum cœlorum, aut beata immortalitas, sed *ipsa ecclesia.** Thus in 1 Pet. ii. 9. they are styled, λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, a *people acquired*, or *purchased to himself in a peculiar manner;* or, a *people for a peculiar possession.* Paul says, 1 Thess. v. 9. "God hath not appointed *us* to wrath; but to the περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, *obtaining*, or *acquiring* of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that we should live with him." And 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. he says, "Beloved of the Lord, God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, unto περιποίησιν δόξης, the *obtaining* or *acquisition*, of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let the impartial judge if these passages do not strongly favour the peculiarity of design in Christ's death. And thus it is said of Christians, τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε, *ye are bought with a price.* 1 Cor. vi. 20. vii. 23.

If 2 Pet. ii. 1. should be alleged as an objection, I hope I have given a sufficient reason why that passage is not to be understood of the Saviour's blood, but of God's deliverance

* Περιποίησις, which we render the purchased possession, is not the kingdom of heaven, or a blessed immortality, but the *church itself.*

in a way of providence, p. 89.* It is such a reason, however, as Mr. T. has not attempted to answer.

LETTER XII.

Dear Sir,

MR. T. in his *Nine Letters*, offered arguments for the universal extent of Christ's death. He argued from the *goodness* of God over all his works, and from various passages of scripture which speak of the death of Christ in indefinite language. The principal of these passages and arguments I have considered in my *Reply*. Mr. T. in the Eleventh Letter of his last publication, defends his former arguments.

Before I enter on a discussion of particulars, I would observe, that although Mr. T. pleads for the universal extent of Christ's death, yet he pleads for it in no other sense than as laying a foundation for sinners, without distinction, being invited to return home to God by Jesus Christ, with the promise of forgiveness and acceptance on their return. He does not pretend, that there is provision made by the death of Christ for the *certain* salvation of all men. Now, the thing itself for which he pleads, is no more than I have admitted. It is true I have supposed, that this, being done for men in general, cannot, with propriety, be called dying *for* them. At the same time, I have allowed, that "many considerable writers, who are far from denying that the salvation of all the saved is owing to an absolute, and consequently limited, design in the death of Christ, have supposed that it might; and that the indefinite language of scripture, concerning the death of Christ, is intended to convey to us this idea." The thing itself I do not controvert; only it appeared, to me, that the terms *ransom*, *propitiation*, *dying for us*, &c. were intended to convey something more than this,

* Page 314, of this volume.

and what is true only of the finally saved. Now, admitting that I am mistaken in my supposition; admitting that the terms *propitiation*, *ransom*, &c. are applicable to mankind in general, and are designed to express that there is a way opened for sinners, without distinction, to return home to God, and be saved; nothing follows from it, but that I have misunderstood certain passages of scripture, by considering them as conveying an indefinite, but not a universal idea. In regard to the sentiment itself, I do not see that Mr. T. pleads for more than I have admitted, except in one instance: we agree that a way is opened, by the death of Christ, for the salvation of sinners, without distinction; and that any man may be saved, if he is willing to come to Christ, that he may have life. Here I stop; but Mr. T. goes a step farther, and maintains, that such a provision of grace is made by the death of Christ, that all men have power *to be willing, if they will*; but of this I am satisfied no meaning can be made.

I now proceed to particulars, by observing, that, whether my sense of the passages of scripture adduced by Mr. T. be just, or not, it does not appear, to me, that he has invalidated it. He argued, in general, from Psa. cxlv. 9. *His tender mercies are over all his works.* I answered, that the death of Christ was not the criterion of God's goodness; that fallen angels were a part of God's works, as well as fallen men. Mr. T. replies, by observing, that fallen angels were not here *intended.* (XIII. 106.) Then, it seems, Mr. T. can sometimes discern a restriction in the word *all*, though a *universal* term. Perhaps it may be sufficient to observe, that, whether the phrase *all his works* intends all fallen angels, or not, it intends more than that part of God's works for which Christ died. Is it not evident from the context, that it denotes God's providential goodness towards the whole animate creation? Is it not said of them, in verse 16, that *their eyes wait on* HIM; HE *openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing?*

But Mr. T. contends, that "there is no *goodness*, no *mercy*, no *tender mercy*, exercised toward a person who is placed in such a situation that he could not avoid sinning, and being damned, and whose damnation is necessarily increased by calls and commands to repent, and believe in Christ; when the

great God, whose commands these are, has provided no mercy for him, nor intends to give him the least assistance, though he knows the poor sinner cannot, nor ever possibly could, obey these calls and commands, any more than he can fly to the moon." (XIII. 106.) To this shocking representation I have only to say, This is not *my* hypothesis, nor any thing like it; and if Mr. T. thinks it is, it is time to give over controverting the matter with him. The whole passage is mere declamation, founded on the abuse of the terms *cannot*, *could not*, &c. If, instead of "*cannot*, and *never could*," he had said, *will not*, and *never would*, his account of the poor sinner's case would not have appeared so plausible: and yet this, he knows, is the whole of our meaning. 'Yes, "but if they could never *will* to comply," says Mr. T. 'that amounts to the same thing:' (XIII. 57.) That is, unless they have the power of being *willing*, *if they will*. Of this I shall only say, that, when Mr. T. can make sense of it, it will be time enough to answer it.

What follows has much more of argument in it. "If the tender mercies of God are over all his works; and if no man can enjoy any mercy, but through Jesus Christ; is it not a natural and reasonable conclusion, that God has given his Son to die for all mankind?" (XIII. 105.) I must observe, however, by the way, that, "if no *man* can enjoy any mercy, but through Jesus Christ," I cannot but consider this as a full proof, that the whole race were unworthy of all mercy, and that God might, consistently with his justice and essential goodness, have withheld it from them, and treated them as worthy of death: for I have no idea that God needed the death of his Son to induce him to do *that*, which if he had *not* done, the omission of it would have exposed him to the charge of cruelty. If Mr. T. had always remembered this consideration, (which, I think, he cannot controvert,) it would have induced him to expunge a great deal of declamation in his letters. Having noted this, I confess I think that much mercy is exercised towards men in general, through Jesus Christ; and, consequently, that his death was productive of effects which terminate on all. Nor do I question, whether the opening of a way for the salvation of all who shall come unto God by him, and for men, without distinction, to be in-

vited thus to come, is owing to the death of Christ; and, if this can be called dying *for all* mankind, I should admit, without hesitation, that he died for all. All I contend for is, that Christ, in his death, absolutely designed the salvation of all those who are finally saved; and that, besides the objects of such absolute design, such is the universal depravity of human nature, not one soul will ever believe, and be saved.

I am surprised at Mr. T.'s manner of treating the argument drawn from the objections that might be urged by a denier of God's foreknowledge; asking whether I would seriously avow them? (XIII. 107.) One would think he need not be told that I seriously disapprove that mode of reasoning, as well as of his; and only meant, through that, to show the tendency of his own. Such a way of arguing is fair and upright, and is used by writers of every description: it, therefore, ought not to have been called a *finesse*. Mr. T. in what he has said on this subject, as in many other places, gives sufficient proof of two things: 1. That he is combating a scheme which his opponent does not hold; 2. That to reason with him upon such terms as *cannot*, *unable*, or *unavoidable*, and the like, is to no purpose; for that he either cannot, or will not, understand our ideas concerning them.

Mr. T. now enters on a defence of his arguments from the terms *all men*, *world*, *whole world*, &c. (XIII. 110.) I apprehend, that, to understand these terms as denoting men *universally*, was contrary to other scriptures—to the scope of the inspired writers *in the places where those expressions are found*—and involved in it various absurdities. Mr. T. wishes I had given some instances of these contradictions and absurdities. This I certainly attempted in a great deal of what followed; but Mr. T. has never yet fairly refuted my remarks.

I pass over some less important matters, and observe what is advanced from 1 Tim. ii. 6. *He gave himself a ransom for all.* Mr. T. here complains, that I have not answered his reasons for understanding the term *all* universally; and I might as well complain of him, for his not considering my reasons for understanding it otherwise. I remember that he had argued, (IX. 79.) from the use of the term *all* in the context, and the cogency of the apostle's argument, "Pray

for *all*, because Christ died for all." I cannot but think, with Mr. Robinson, that "this passage *ought not* to be urged in the Arminian controversy; for a part of this period fixes the sense to *ranks*, or degrees, of men. Pray for *kings*, and for all that are *in authority*. The meaning, then, is, pray for all *ranks* and degrees of men; for God will save some of *all orders*. Christ gave himself a ransom for persons of all *degrees*."* The arguments I had advanced in my *Reply*,† to prove that this passage could not be understood of men universally, he has not answered, but runs off into a declamation concerning the secret and revealed will of God, the substance of which I had endeavoured to obviate in my *Reply*.‡

Little more, I think, need be said on 1 John ii. 1. What each of us has advanced upon it is before the public. My sense of the passage, which Mr. T calls a strange notion," (XIII. 15.) surely is not more strange or singular than *his* notion of *redemption*. He must produce some better proof for another sense of the passage, than "appealing to the understanding and conscience of *his friend*."§

It is wonderful that Mr. T. should plead for the *universal* spread of the gospel in the times of the apostles, and for the faith of the Romans being celebrated *in all parts*. (XIII. 116.) In all parts of the Roman empire it might, and in some other nations; but can any man persuade himself that it was spoken of at Mexico or Otaheite?

Mr. T. thinks, that the *whole earth* (Isa. liv. 5.) is to be understood *universally*, and that God is there called the *God of the whole earth*, as a creator, supporter, and judge, in distinction from the tender character of a husband. But, as he is called both the *maker* and the *husband* of the church there addressed; so, it seems very evident, he is described towards

* Notes upon *Claude*, Vol. II. pp. 269, 270.

† Pages 308, 309, of this volume.

‡ Pages 319—321, of this volume. Note.

§ It may not be inexpedient to inform some readers, that Mr. T.'s letters were written to an old and intimate friend of *his own*, who entirely agrees with him in sentiment, and at whose request, Mr. T. first commenced this controversy; though, as that gentleman had some slight acquaintance with Mr. Fuller, Mr. T. all along, speaks to him of Mr. F. as the friend of his correspondent. R.

the *whole earth*. He who had heretofore been called *the Holy One of Israel*, shall now be called *the God of the whole earth*. See Henry's exposition.

The term *whole*, in Matt. xiii. 33. undoubtedly is to be understood restrictively; for, though the gospel will spread over all nations, before the end of the world, yet not so as to renew every individual in them, much less every individual that has existed at every period. (XIII. 117.)

Mr. T. is astonished to find me asserting, that he himself does not understand the terms *whole world*, in 1 John ii. 2. and the same terms, in chap. v. 19. in the same sense, seeing he has declared the contrary. (XIII. 118.) Perhaps I had better have said, Mr. T. *cannot*, *upon due consideration*, understand those terms as parallel; seeing he considers them, in the first, as meaning all the individuals in the world *that ever did*, *or shall*, *exist*, except the persons from whom they are there distinguished; whereas he cannot pretend that the last mean any more than the world of ungodly men, who *at that time* existed.

Another passage that has been considered by both of us, is 2 Cor. v. 15. *If one died for all*, *then were all dead*, &c. (XIII. 118.) Mr. T. here complains, as he does in other places, of my not drawing my conclusions in form. I thought the conclusions I meant to draw were obvious to every attentive reader, and omitted drawing them out at length, for the sake of brevity. I observed, 1. That the context speaks of the *Gentiles*, as well as the Jews, being interested in Christ. I supposed, therefore, it might be understood of men of *all nations*, in distinction from its being confined to the Jews. 2. That the apostle meant to affirm, *not* that Christ died for all that were dead, *but* that all were dead for whom Christ died. In proof of this, I argued from the apostle's describing the *terrors* of divine vengeance to which they were subject; and from the phraseology of verse 14. *If one died for all*, *then were* THEY *all dead*. For this, Mr. T. has corrected me, charging me with misquoting the scripture. The words of the apostle are, ὅτι εἰ εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανον, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον. Not having had those advantages for literary improvement which I should have been glad to enjoy, I was not forward, by a formal criticism, to tell my readers

that I had acquired some small acquaintance with the original language, so as to be able to judge of the propriety of a translation; but I knew that the article οἱ here used, has been thought, by very competent judges,* to be anaphorical, or relative and that the passage should be read, *If one for all died, then* THEY *all, or* THOSE *all, were dead.* Nothing can be more exact than this translation, unless Mr. T. would insist on having οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον rendered THE *all were dead;* and then he must equally complain of our common translators, for rendering οἱ ζῶντες in the next verse, *they who live*, instead of THE *living*. But would not Mr. T. be ashamed to insinuate, on this account, to "the inattentive reader," that they have "interlined and abused" the original language of scripture. I am so well assured of Mr. T.'s learning, that I am hardly able to consider his "hope" that I quoted the passage wrong "through mistake," as any other than "a *finesse*." 3. I observed, on the distributive *they who*, that my hypothesis, though it supposes that all for whom Christ died shall finally live, yet does not suppose that they all live *at present*. Here, I think, Mr. T. certainly misunderstands me. His original argument is *this:* by the language of the text it appears that Christ died for more than actually live. My answer is, that, upon *my* hypothesis, Christ died for more than actually live at any period of time; part of them being, at every period, in a state of unregeneracy.

I have gone over the passages in debate between us, merely to prove, that, whether my sense of those passages be just, or not, Mr. T. has not invalidated it. At the same time, I cannot forbear repeating, that, even allowing Mr. T. to have proved the universal extent of Christ's death in the most forcible manner, he has not proved that any thing more is done towards the salvation of men in general, than what I admit, or that renders the salvation of *one* individual more *probable*.

I have, all along, supposed, that there *is that* done for them by Christ, which renders their salvation no otherwise *impossible*, nor their destruction *unavoidable*, than as it is rendered so by their own temper of mind: no other obstacle could pre-

* Beza, Piscator, and Gill. See Gill's *Cause of God and Truth*. Part I. No. XXXIX.

vent their believing to the saving of their souls, but an evil heart, obstinately persisting in its departure from the living God.

Mr. T. sums up his evidence, on this subject, in *five* topics of argument. The silence of scripture on the limited extent of Christ's death; the willingness of the blessed God that all should turn, and live; those who are not saved being more miserable than if Christ had not died; the unlimited expressions used concerning the death of Christ; and such passages as distinguish between those for whom he died, and those who are finally saved. (XIII. 120)

With regard to the *first*, the Bible is *not* silent concerning a *special design* in the death of Christ, as in all the other works of God, in behalf of all who are finally saved. I hope this has been proved in Letters X. and XI. and in my *Reply*, pp. 66—76.* It is true, there are no such express words, that I know of, in the Bible; but if the idea is there conveyed, that is sufficient. Mr. T. says, indeed that, "if a doctrine is not *mentioned* in scripture, there is reason to believe that doctrine is not true: that we admit this on all other subjects, and ought to admit it on this." But so far is this from being fact, that we never find *express mention* of a *divine providence*, and yet we all allow the scripture to be full of it. Reasoning from positive institutions to doctrines, as Mr. T. has done, (XIII. 109.) is very unfair.

Mr. T.'s *second* topic of argument is taken from the universality of divine love to man, and the willingness of the blessed God that all should turn, and live. It is admitted, that God's love to man is, in one sense, universal. He bears good will towards them, as the work of his hands; but it does not follow from thence, that he must do all that he could do for their salvation. If God loves all mankind, he must have loved the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, as well as those of Chorazin and Bethsaida: but though, as Mr. T. thinks, (XIII. 25.) if the same things which were done for the latter without effect, had been done for the former, they would have been effectual; yet they were not done. As to God's willingness that all should turn, and live, God's will, as

* Pages 295—303 of this volume.

has been observed, sometimes expresses what he *approves*, and sometimes what he *purposes*.* God wills, approves, and desires a sinner's turning unto him. It is that which, through the whole Bible, is required of him; and whosoever thus returns shall live. I may add, God is willing to receive and forgive every sinner that returns to him through Jesus Christ. He desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would repent, and live. But he has *not purposed* the salvation of every sinner, or to incline his heart to embrace the salvation exhibited in the gospel. In this sense, the salvation of some is neither *desired* nor *designed*: if it were, it would be *effected*; for *his counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure.—Whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth.* Isa. xlvi. 10. Job xxiii. 13. "But can God," says Mr. T. "will that which he knows to be *impossible?* which *never was possible?* which *none could make possible*, besides himself? which he was *never willing* to make possible?" (XIII. 120.) If by *impossible*, Mr. T. means, that which is *naturally* impossible, it is granted he cannot. But that he wills what is *morally* impossible, Mr. T. himself must allow. God wills that Christians should be holy, as he himself is holy; and that, in the present life, or he would not have enjoined it upon them. 1 Peter iv. 16. Matt. v. 48. But Mr. T. does not pretend that this is possible, even by the assistance of divine grace. (XIII. 61.)

Mr. T.'s *third* topic of argument is thus expressed: "All who are not saved will be more miserable than if Christ had never died for sinners. If Christ did not die for them, they cannot, nor ever could, possibly avoid this. This cannot be reconciled to the scripture account of divine justice and goodness." (XIII. 120.) Answer, 1. This can only be said of *those* who have *heard* the *gospel*, and *rejected* it, and not of "all who are not saved," that they will be more miserable than if Christ had never died. Supposing this argument, therefore, to be valid, it will not prove, that Christ, in laying down his life designed the salvation of all men universally, but merely of those to whom the gospel is exhibited. 2. It is no way inconsistent with the justice or goodness of God to suffer

* Pages 319—321 of this volume. Note.

good to be the *occasion* of evil. The gospel was preached to the unbelieving Jews, even after it was said of them, *Hearing they shall hear, and not understand; and seeing they shall see, and not perceive;* and became the occasion of much sin and misery. Matt. xiii. 14. 'But they *might* have embraced the gospel when it was *first* preached to them, if they would.' True: and at *last*, too; or it had been absurd to have preached it to them. There was nothing that hindered their believing, first or last, but their own wicked hearts. On that account, they *could not* believe. John xii. 39. yet Christ, at the very time this was declared, exhorted them, while they had *light*, to *believe in the light*, *that* they might *be the children of light;* (ver. 36.) and their contempt of his counsel aggravated their misery.

Mr. T.'s *fourth* topic of argument is taken from the "*expressions* of scripture, where the extent of Christ's death is directly mentioned, being all universal and unlimited." Something has been said, in the *Reply to Philanthropos*,* which accounts for these indefinite modes of speech; something too, which Mr. T. I think, has not sufficiently answered. But, suppose it were allowed, as has been said before, that the language of scripture, taken in its most literal and plain meaning, proves Christ, in some sense, to have died for all mankind; still, if we will give fair scope to other parts of scripture, it is evident, that, in some sense, he died only for a part. These scriptures have been considered in Letter X. and in the *Reply to Philanthropos*, pp. 66—76.†

Lastly, Mr. T. observes, that "several passages evidently distinguish between those for whom Christ died, and those who will be finally saved. (XIII. 121.) The passages to which he refers are John iii. 16. *God so loved* THE WORLD, *that he gave his only-begotten Son, that* WHOSOEVER *believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* and Matt. xxii. 1—11. concerning the marriage-feast, and provision being made for those who did not come; with John vi. 32. *My Father giveth* YOU *the true bread from heaven;* which, as he observes, was spoken to the Jews *in general*, without restriction. (IX. 83.)

* Pages 306, 307 of this volume.

† Pages 295—303 of this volume.

These passages prove, that there is *that* in the death of Christ which lays a foundation for any sinner to apply to God in his name; and that, with an assurance of success. But this is no more than I have admitted. In the invitations of the gospel being general, we are both agreed; and also in a provision of pardon and acceptance on behalf of all who believe; and that, therefore, there is no impossibility in the way of men's salvation, but what consists in the temper of their own minds. But this does not disprove either the *reality* or *necessity* of an *effectual* provision of grace in behalf of *all* who are finally saved.

I conclude this letter by recommending Mr. T. to consider whether his scheme is not inconsistent with *fact*. If I understand him, he supposes, that "final misery" comes not upon any of the sons of men "by their original depravity, nor by their transgression of the law, but by their rejection of the overtures of mercy." Hence he supposes, that "all who are not saved will be more miserable than if Christ had not died for sinners." (IX. 86. XIII. 120.) Though the above expressions might be considered as meant only of those sinners who hear the gospel, yet his subsequent reasonings indicate that he viewed it as applicable to all mankind. He speaks, all along, as if our Saviour had not only died for the whole world, but as *if the whole world had heard the gospel*, and as if none could perish, consistently with the justice and goodness of God, but for their rejection of it. Thus he goes on, bearing all down before him: "If Christ died for *all*, these reasons for their final condemnation and misery are all perfectly clear and easy; because the provision being made for them, (that is, for *all*,) AND EXHIBITED TO THEM, (that is, to *all*,) they could not perish, unless by rejection of that provision. Difficulty and inconsistency is all removed." (IX. 87.) This is talking at a high rate. Thus many a writer, as well as Mr. T. has sat in his study, and formed a theory, and delighted himself with its excellency. But bring it to *experience* and *fact*. Is it FACT, that the provision of the gospel has been, or is, "exhibited to all?" Mr. T.'s system requires that it should; and he seems to wish to take it for granted that it actually has; but *facts* contradict it.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Dear Sir,

THERE is doubtless, an analogy between the works of God. Whatever variety there is in the works of creation, providence, or redemption, there are some general principles wherein they all agree. On this supposition, I argued for the consistency of sinners being exhorted and invited to return home to God by Jesus Christ, though no *such* provision be made for their return as shall remove their moral inability to comply. Thus, or to this effect, I have expressed it in my *Reply*.* Mr. T. here complains of the *darkness* of my reasoning. (XIII. 124.) How far this is just, I shall not decide; but this is pretty evident, that there must have been darkness somewhere, or there could not have been such answers given, as there are.

I argued, in the *first* place, from the appointment of God respecting the time of human life. Men are exhorted to use means for prolonging their lives; and yet the time of their life is appointed of God; and some of them, as king Saul, and Judas, for instance, have been under the dominion of a *moral impotency*, in regard to preserving life. They were given up of God to their own wickedness, like those who *cannot cease from* sin; and it was the purpose of a just God, for reasons satisfactory to himself, thus to give them up.

But Mr. T. asks, "Supposing God has fixed the duration of every man's life, has he appointed (he should have said, *exhorted*) men to use means to prolong their lives beyond that duration?" (XIII. 126.) If self-preservation is a duty, and if God, at all times, exhorts us to exercise it; then it undoubtedly was the duty of Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas, to have used means to prolong their lives beyond the period to which

* I did not undertake to prove, as Mr. T. expresses it, "the consistency of gospel invitations, where *no* provision is made." I admitted a provision, and explained in what sense I admitted it. *Reply*, pp. 89, 90.†

† Page 314 of this volume.

they actually lived. The former, and his armour-bearer, *ought* to have avoided the sword, and the latter the rope. But "has God told us, that we shall certainly die at the time he has appointed, if we do not use the means of prolonging life?" If I understand this question, it is intended to deny that the time of man's life is appointed of God, any otherwise than on condition of their using means. Doubtless, he that has appointed the end, has appointed the means; and Mr. T. should remember, that he had just admitted the appointment to be absolute, and professed now to be reasoning upon that supposition. But "has he assured us that all the means we use shall certainly succeed?" No, he has not; but I do not see, wherein this difference between the case in hand and the call of the gospel affects the argument. But "if we die at the time God has appointed, does he charge that to our account, and say, it was because we did not use means to prolong our lives? Certainly, he does not lay his own appointments to our charge; but he may the time and manner of our death, and punish us for them, so far as they were owing to our sin, even though he has appointed to give us up to that sin. This was true of Saul and Judas, who ought to have used means to live longer than they did, and exposed themselves to future punishment for using the contrary. But "does the great God declare and swear, that he would not have us die naturally, at the time when he has absolutely appointed that we should die? Does he say, we *might live longer if we would?* that he has called us to live longer; and, if we do not, it is because we *will not?*" Mr. T. should remember, I was not reasoning from the case of those who "die naturally," but from the case of such who, through their own sin, "come to what is called an untimely end," as did Saul and Judas; and, in these instances, each of his questions may be answered in the affirmative. And a similar instance we have in the case of those Jews who died *by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence*, in consequence of their refusal to submit to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, in Jer. xxvii. 13. which case I would recommend to the close attention of the Pseudo-Calvinists, as well as to that of Mr. Taylor.

I argued, in the *second* place, from the appointments of God respecting *our portion in this life.* Men are exhorted

and invited to seek after those good things, and to avoid those evil things, which, yet, many of them are morally unable to pursue or to avoid; and God has appointed to leave them, in this case, to their own negligence and depravity.* Mr. T.'s questions under this head, (XIII. 127.) as under the former, are not in point. The question is, not whether *all* troubles arise from indiscretion, or any particular sin, of the party: if any do, that is sufficient for my argument. If there are troubles which might be avoided, *if we would*, and if it is the revealed will of God that we should avoid them, that is sufficient. Pharaoh and Sihon were exhorted and invited to comply with the messages of peace that were sent them; and yet they were under the dominion of a moral impotency to comply; and God had appointed to leave them to the hardness of their hearts, in which they perished, and involved themselves in ruin.

Nor is it in point for Mr. T. to allege, that no directions are given in scripture, with encouragements and promises annexed, which the great God does not give *power* to practise, and with regard to which he has not provided such a *sufficiency*, as that the practice invariably answers the ends designed by it, according to the tenor of the directions, and promises or encouragements connected with them." (XIII. 128.) All this is granted, both in respect to the things of this life, and also of that to come, and is no more than what perfectly accords with my views of the gospel. I never supposed but that Pharaoh and Sihon had *power*, strictly speaking, to comply with the messages that were sent to them, or that there would have been any want of *sufficiency*, on God's part, to have made good his promises, in case they had complied.

I argued, in the *third* place, from *events which imply the evil actions of men* coming under divine appointment. The Jews, in the time of Christ, were exhorted and invited to em-

* Admitting, that, in some sense, Christ is given to the world in general, yet I suppose that it is in the same sense in which *the earth* is said to be *given to the children of men;* (Psa. cxv. 16) in which general gift God still reserves to himself the power of disposing in a way of special providence, of all its particular parts to particular persons, even to such a degree, that every individual has a *cup* assigned him to drink—a *lot*, which Providence marks out for him.

brace the gospel; and yet they were under the dominion of a moral impotency to comply; and it appears, from many passages of scripture, that God had determined not to turn their hearts, but to give them over to their own ways, which would certainly issue in the crucifixion of Christ, and in their own destruction. As Jehovah had said, long before, to their forefathers, in the days of Jeremiah, *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee;* while yet the prophet says, immediately after, respecting those very persons, *To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they* CANNOT *hearken;* so our Lord remarked to his disciples, *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.* Thus, of the same persons to whom the blessed Jesus had said, *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light;* it is added immediately, *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they* COULD NOT *believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.**

Perhaps Mr. T. will say, 'But they might have had grace *before* that time.' Be that as it may, it makes nothing to the argument; seeing they were exhorted and invited, *at the time* in which it was declared they *could not believe.*

I suppose God has willed, appointed, or ordained, to permit sin. Mr. T. is not fond of saying that God permits sin. I suppose he would not object to the term *suffer*, which is applied to the existence of moral evil. Acts xiv. 16. He *suffered* all nations to walk in their own ways; and the term *permit*, as any English dictionary will inform us, conveys the

* Jer. vi. 8. 10. Mark iv. 11, 12. John xii. 36—40.

same idea, "to suffer without authorizing or approving," which is the only sense in which we use it on this subject; though the word is sometimes used in a different signification, as 'to allow by not forbidding,' or even 'to authorize.' Mr. T.'s notions of what is necessary to *free agency* I have already considered, in the beginning of Letter III.

The *next* topic of argument is taken from those who had sinned the sin against the Holy Spirit being, notwithstanding, exhorted to embrace the Lord Jesus: from whence I conclude, that such exhortations and invitations were addressed to some men, whom, at the same time, strictly speaking, "it was not the intention of Christ to save." Mr. T.'s answer to this is foreign from the point. He "hopes Mr. F. will not assert, that those who sin against the Holy Spirit do it *necessarily*, and never were, or could be, able to avoid it, either by our own power, or by the power of divine grace."* How they came to sin that sin, is not the question. I did not argue from what they were *before*, or at the time, but from their state *after* having committed that sin. His accounting for the consistency of gospel-invitations being addressed to them, after they had sinned the unpardonable sin, by alleging, that provision *had been* made for them, though now "they had sinned themselves beyond the reach of it." (XIII. 130) is equally foreign. To argue that it is consistent to give an exhortation or invitation *to-day*, because grace might have been obtained yesterday, is absurd. If the gospel and its invitations were addressed to them, when their destruction was certain, then it is not inconsistent to address those invitations even to men who, as it may afterwards prove, were, at the very time, as the just reward of their iniquity, appointed to utter destruction. The indefinite call of the gospel including them

* XIII. 129. It is to very little purpose to controvert with Mr. T. so long as he is determined to affix to terms ideas which we utterly disavow. It is plain, that by *necessarily* he means by *compulsion*, or in such sort as they were not *able* to avoid, let them strive ever so sincerely against it. He need not question my denying, that the sin against the Holy Spirit, or any other sin, could be committed in this way. Our idea of *moral necessity* is no other than that of *certainty*, or a certain connexion between evil principles and evil practices, unless prevented by some exterior cause.

as well as others, and the declaration of our Lord, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*, holding good in regard to them, as well as any others; it might be said, with truth, that there was no *natural* impossibility in the way of their salvation; that, if they had repented, they would have found mercy. But the impossibility respected their being brought to repentance. Heb. vi. 4. 6. They were under the power of a *moral impotence;* or, which is the same thing, of a rooted enmity to Christ; and God had determined to leave them in that state, to perish for their sin.

I argued, in the *next* place, from the *moral impotence* of all men to *love God with all their hearts, and their neighbour as themselves;* which, yet, we are exhorted to. Deut. v. 29. Matt. v. 48. "Perhaps," says Mr. T. "these premises might be fairly disputed." (XIII. 130.) That they might be disputed, is true; but surely not by Mr. T. He does not profess, that grace is provided sufficient to enable men to keep the law, but barely to comply with the gospel. (XIII. 61.) And surely he cannot dispute our being exhorted to it: what meaning else is there in the above-cited passages? "But, admitting the premises," says Mr. T. "surely Mr. Fuller will allow, that God *originally* gave man power sufficient to keep the moral law: otherwise, how could man be justly condemned for breaking it? True: but what has the *original* power given to man to do with the argument, which concerns men in their present state? They are *now* exhorted to love God with all their hearts: and yet they are under a moral inability to comply; and grace is not provided, to enable them to comply. Compare Deut. v. 29. with xxix. 4. These are facts, and facts that are in point, too. The difference between the law and the gospel, on which Mr. T. dwells, makes nothing to his purpose. The above facts will prove, that a *moral ability*, which men either possess, or might possess, is not necessary to render exhortations consistent.

Mr. T.'s argument, from the power that was given man originally to keep the law, for a power in men to comply with the gospel, is very just, provided it be understood of *power*, properly so called; namely, a *capacity to embrace it, if they would.* But if by power he means *inclination*, (as he must, if it is of any use to him,) that is quite another thing. God

is under no obligation to turn men's hearts, in order to free his messages to them from the charge of inconsistency.

Lastly, I argued from the *certain perseverance of believers.* This subject, if Mr. T. admits it, must contradict his notion of a certain and effectual influence upon the mind being inconsistent with free agency, (XIII. 129.) and will prove, that an absolute purpose in God to accomplish an end, is consistent with the use of means, motives, warnings, counsels, &c.

What remains of Mr. T.'s performance has either been occasionally noticed already, or is of such a nature as not to require an answer. He drops several remarks, towards the close of his piece, which are very good; in which I heartily unite with him. Whatever I may think of his sentiments, my good opinion of Mr. T.'s integrity and piety is not lessened by this controversy. Heartily desiring that every blessing may attend us all, and that we may each be led into the truth as it is in Jesus,

I remain,
Dear Sir,
Affectionately yours,
AGNOSTOS.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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